CHRISTIAN EDUCATION AND URBAN MINISTRY: FOR THE COMMON GOOD: A COMMUNAL PARADIGM OF LAY LEADERSHIP

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ABSTRACT

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This project focuses on a model of ministry that seeks to empower lay leaders in their efforts to provide programs that encourage and foster the creation and maintenance of community in Antioch Baptist Christian Church in Atlanta, Georgia. Lay leaders participated in a twelve week regimen of leadership training sessions, sermons and practicums. The results from the qualitative pre-/post analyses demonstrated that the lay leaders experienced a positive change of attitude about leadership in the church, an enlightened disposition towards the practice of shared-ministry and a deeper understanding about the dynamics of community.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To God be the glory and power forever and ever for the good things that God has wrought in this journey! Truly, there are no words or expressions that can absolutely declare how grateful to God this author is. It was definitely God who provided resources throughout this arduous task, resources that can now only be described as miracles. So this pastor offers up the profoundest expressions of thanksgiving to Almighty God!

Expressions of goodwill and thanks are extended to the following persons: Alonzo Waddell for choosing to remain in covenant, despite the hard journey; my sister, Cynthia Robinson, for believing when believing was difficult; my family of faith in Antioch Baptist Christian Church who supported through prayer, encouragement and patience; my women's support group, Women in Red, for demonstrating the patience of Mrs. Job during the tenure of the doctoral program; my nieces, Jessica and Jacklyn Robinson who are learning to entrust their repository of wisdom to God and themselves; my nephew, Miles who continues to enjoy camaraderie with me and who knew how to distract me during the difficult moments; my mentor, Dr. J. Sherman Pelt, who seems to possess an overabundance of energy and insight that allows him to work with so many different personalities and characters; my peer group: Diane, Evelyn, Ponce, Phil, Harold, Ed, Ruth, Kecia, Pat and Terry; my professional associates, Dr. Lacey Alford and Dr. Charles Harper; and my context associates: Carolyn White, David Morrison, Carolyn Cratic, Delores Heard, Yolander Jones, Phyllis Morrison, Ron Tillman, Pamela Lane, Shirley Billingsley, Rosalind Billingsley and Rev. A. D. Waddell.

Maxine J. Waddell

DEDICATIONS

The arduous journey which this author undertook could not have been attempted nor completed without the presence and assistance of many persons. It is to the following persons that this work is dedicated: A. D. Waddell, a God-sent spouse; Lizzie D. Johnson, a mother who continues to stay in the struggle for wholeness in life with a great sense of joy; Frank H. Johnson, who knows how to nurture others in their journey; the community of Antioch Baptist Christian Church, who affirms God's call in their full worship life; and to J. Sherman Pelt, who kept his vow and commitment to see us through the doctoral program.

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ABBREVIATIONS

ABCC	Antioch Baptist Christian Church
ALC	Abundant Life Christian Church
AME	African Methodist Episcopal
KJV	King James Version
MPBC	Mount Pleasant Baptist Church
NIV	New International Version
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version

INTRODUCTION

The model of ministry which is being undertaken for this doctoral program encompasses an exploration of how to identify, train and empower lay leaders in newly organized autonomous communities of faith in ways that will lead to increased participation in the ministry and missional endeavors of the church from the lay persons in the church. The recently founded and established church of Antioch Baptist Christian Church, located in the urban metropolis of Atlanta, Georgia, served as the ecclesial context which is under examination in the model of ministry.

The principles upon which Antioch Baptist Christian Church was established have been consistent with the notion of the church as the *ecclesia,*[1] the gathered community, which Jesus prophetically promulgated during His earthly tenure. A greater proportion of the members of Antioch Baptist Christian Church came with the earnest desire of becoming a part of a worshipping community whose God-encounters, sapiental and experiential aspects of life would allow them to become active partners in the work of the church. This sacred and reasoned rationale about the ecclesia as the community of the people of God who have been called into communion with God and into *koinonia* with each other by Jesus Christ has emerged as a unique and distinctive feature of Antioch Baptist Christian Church, in addition to the concerns for Christian discipleship.

The pastor/prophet stands in a committed union with the faith community in their attempts to form and maintain a strong sense of fellowship within the gathered body of

[1] Matthew 16:18 (Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture references are taken from the New Revised Standard Version, NRSV)

believers. Her personal story is replete with the understanding that the entire community of the people of God has been called to become involved in the ministries and missional work of the earthly church as the ecclesia works to usher in the kingdom of God on earth. Despite this belief on the part of this pastor/prophet, her past service as a minister of Christian education at a local urban autonomous congregation caused her to observe the dearth of participation from the laity in the full worship life of the church.

Attendance at Sunday worship, annual special days and choir festivals would be at an all-time high. However, ministry projects and mission activities that had been developed by various lay ministries suffered from both attendance and participation by the members of the church. Concomitant with these glaring disconnects in church life, there appeared to be little or no evidence of transformation among the persons who did attend the ministry functions. This phenomenon caused the pastor/prophet/researcher to recognize the need to aid lay ministries in their endeavors as they sought to participate in witnessing the Good News to the church in ways that would result in spiritual growth, discipleship, liberation and transformation among the community of believers.

Therefore, the researcher and author of this dissertation became determined to explore the area of lay leadership in an attempt to foster a response that would engender involvement from the whole community in the full worship life of the church. The researcher hypothesized that this would ultimately translate into spiritual growth, greater faith and changed life-styles among the members of the community of faith. It became even more important to the researcher to seek redress to this issue when the Creator called upon her, subsequent to the cessation of her tenure as minister of Christian education at her former church, to tend to the business of the kingdom by founding and

establishing a community of faith. It was out of this crucible of personal angst, critical introspection and ministerial pressure that this researcher came to this issue of lay leadership. The need for a systematic means of training and empowering lay leaders on how to deliver ministerial endeavors that would resonate with a triply aligned focus on the spiritual, the ecclesial and the communal became an overriding concern.

The ministry of Christian education served as the foundational rubric for the model of ministry that is documented in this project. However, this researcher chose to present another aspect of Christian education in her approach to this issue – that of engaged pedagogy. The perspective of engaged pedagogy provided opportunities for the lay leaders to critically ponder the issues under review by this project; to be in dialogue with one another and the laity; and to participate as accountability partners in their own learning.

A qualitative methodology was employed in the examinations and analyses that were administered to the lay leaders and to a select group of lay persons from within the context of the urban church. Direct observation, questionnaires, narrative evidence, case studies, surveys and practical applications bolstered the qualitative approach for the model of ministry. These instruments became invaluable to the researcher as she endeavored to collect data that would serve the objective of determining the salient issues that needed to be addressed in the efforts of the lay ministries to propound a spiritually enriching impact upon the members of the church.

The information shown in Chapter One will present Christian education as the foundational discipline upon which the model of ministry is based. A discussion on lay leadership as impacted by the principles of koinonia will ensue in this same chapter. The

insights, ideologies, spiritual history and interests of the researcher will be introduced in an effort to demonstrate how the ministry issues and the context of ministry combined to result in this model of ministry. A succinct examination of the researcher's rationale for the selection of this choice of issues and model of ministry will also be related in Chapter One. Additionally, the contents of Chapter One will respond to the questions relative to the context that served as the locus of the writer's research and implementation of the model of ministry.

A narrative presentation focusing on the state of the art in the model of ministry will be evinced in Chapter Two. A review of the relevant perspectives from scholars, clergy and diverse theologians on the issue of lay leadership will be articulated in this chapter. Recent theoretical and ministry efforts as actualized in particular communities of faith relative to the issue of communal lay ministry will conclude the data that will be represented in Chapter Two.

The researcher/author will reflect on the theological, Biblical and historical foundations that she employed to establish a theoretical construct for the model of ministry in Chapter Three. It will be in this chapter that the writer will enunciate: 1) the particular theological discipline which informs her approach to the issue of lay ministry; 2) a response to the question of how this issue has been dealt with throughout the history of the church; and 3) an exegetical examination of a pericope from the Hebrew Bible and one from the New Testament, as these texts provide support for the issue that is addressed in the model of ministry.

The scope of Chapter Four will consist of the identification and delineation of the qualitative methodology that was employed to address the ministry issue. Included with

the research method, the project design will be introduced, along with a time line for the implementation of the model of ministry. A hypothesis that will account for the facts and lends itself to being tested by further investigation by the researcher and replication by other communities of faith will be addressed in this chapter. A more expansive description of the ministry project, a treatment proposal and the evaluative tools will be demonstrated in Chapter Four.

Field experience serves as the focal point for Chapter Five. The implementation phase, along with the other phases, of the model of ministry and the results gained during each stage of the project will be recounted in this chapter. In addition to a discourse on the examination of the data, an analysis of any new discoveries made by the researcher during the implementation stage of the model of ministry will be related in narrative form in this chapter.

The researcher will provide a critical assessment of her findings and conclusions from the ministry project in Chapter Six. Any new insights and ideas that have been determined by the author during the implementation of the model of ministry will be accounted for in Chapter Six.

CHAPTER ONE

MINISTRY FOCUS

The theoretical impetus upon which the model of ministry was formulated is the discipline of Christian education. This researcher/educator finds herself in agreement with the doctrinal statements that were enunciated by United Theological Seminary in its doctoral program that sets forth the concerns of Christian education. "The Focus Group will use Christian education as the vehicle to equip urban pastors and church leaders for more effective ministry and outreach in urban communities locally and throughout the world."[1] When there is an understanding that Christian education can serve as a dynamic mode for providing an effective witness of the Good News, it becomes readily apparent that education, especially Christian education, is an indispensable tool in the journey of faith. It is this very principle that the author of this ministry model embraces with wholehearted agreement. She has always emphasized and practiced the tenets of the didactic process that resonate with the theme of transformation in public education. The researcher/educator has eagerly sought to transfer this same enthusiastic bent to the practice of Christian education.

The above-cited explanation proved to be sufficient for employment in a general manner within the overall peer group that functioned under the direction of our mentor, Dr. J. Sherman Pelt. However, for the more particularized usage that this writer desired for employment in the development of her model of ministry, she felt the need to posit a more nuanced definition of Christian education.

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[1] Pamphlet, *United Theological Seminary Presents a Doctor of Ministry Program on Christian Education and Urban Ministries* (Dayton: UTS Publishers, August 2003).

There is an insistence in the twenty-first century urban church that Christian education must resound with intentionality in its efforts to strive to move beyond a traditionally held theoretical focus that maintains a primacy on a teaching only model of Christian education. If the urban church is to be equipped with the tools to live out her mission and reach the world for Christ, Christian educators are required to respond in an affirmative way to their obligation to consciously involve themselves and their students in an empowering pedagogy that emphasizes teaching and learning in simultaneity.

The parameters of Christian education must become elastic to the degree that the urban church will engage in pedagogy, that is, a dialectical process of education that takes seriously the charge to empower all and to engage in wholistic precepts of teaching and learning in similitude.[2] It is this concept of Christian education that garnered the attention of the writer in her formulation of the model of ministry for lay leaders in Antioch Baptist Christian Church. Thus, the model of ministry that is introduced in this document will illustrate by pedagogy and practice the character of a system of teaching and learning whose objective is to engender transformation and empowerment in all of the participants.

One of the pertinent facets that the researcher employed in devising a theoretical construct of a communal model of lay leadership training evolved out of the principles known as engaged pedagogy. According to Paolo Freire, engaged pedagogy perceives education as a method of teaching and learning that empowers the people to develop their own power to perceive critically the way that they exist in the world with which, and in which, they find themselves. The people need to view the world and their conditions not

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[2] Maxine Waddell, *Foundational Paper: Theoretical Foundation for the Focus Group* (Atlanta, 2004), 2.

as a static reality, but as a reality that is continuously in the process of transformation. [3] This definition of engaged pedagogy portrays characteristics of life that are consistent with the author's understanding of community as a value-laden gathering of persons that epitomizes a sense and spirit of kinship among people of faith whose desire for transformation and empowerment extends to all persons in the body of believers.

The theme of the peer group, Christian Education and Urban Ministry, vibrates with the diverse aspects of education that is represented in congregations whose places of worship are spiritually, geographically, sociologically and traditionally located in urban centers. The discipline of transformative Christian education that is rendered through the lens of engaged pedagogy is of vital importance in the liturgical life of parishioners whose worship setting encompasses modern urban contexts. Those who claim membership in urban churches are fully cognizant of two equally powerful dictums in their lives: 1) their places of worship are situated in the caldrons of changing social, civic and juridical issues that come with being located within metropolitan areas; and 2) the church in the urban setting finds herself surrounded by persons, institutions and systems that typify what it means to exist in a post-modern world of diversity. This existence brings with it the concerns of multi-culturalism, religious pluralism, pandemic infrastructure challenges, authoritarian hegemony, inclusion/exclusion, liberation, gerontological matters and diverse socio-economic levels. When these are coupled with the issue of minimal resources with which the urban church can engage in authentic outreach mission to the urban community, the matter of transformative Christian education becomes paramount.

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[3] Paolo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (New York: Continuum International, 2002), 12.

The ministry of Christian education in urban churches is forced to struggle with witnessing an incarnational understanding that demonstrates the church's willingness to be in, for and of the urban setting without assuming the perspectives of individualism that resonate in the urban context. Additionally, this incarnational ministry must be accomplished without compromising the foundational beliefs of the Christian faith.

For the reasons as shown above, it is imperative that the clergy, Christian educators and laity become proficient at the practice of implementing models of pedagogy that have the potential of empowering the community within its diverse contexts. These persons must also insure that their teachings are predicated on the message of Jesus Christ as announced in the New Testament and on the wisdom of God as revealed in the Hebrew Bible.

The area of ministry which informs the model of ministry fits squarely within the parameters of church leadership, as delineated by the principles of leadership that are being practiced by the laity in communities of faith whose polity is comprised of congregational autonomy rather than on a hierarchical or Episcopal construct. The polity and structural aspects became important to the researcher if she were to develop a model of ministry that would be responsive to the ecclesial context and that could be replicated in related church settings. The researcher has been involved in the Baptist tradition for all of her adult life, having been reared in the setting of African Methodism during her childhood. With that in mind, it became necessary for the author to build a model of ministry that could be conducive with the propositions as pronounced in the Baptist tradition. Thus, the challenge that presented itself to the author was how to reconcile the

underlying principles regarding empowerment and liberation with the autonomous heritage that anchors the belief system of the Baptist tradition.

The issue of autonomous forms of church governance is an overriding principle within the Baptist tradition. It is the Baptist faith tradition that asserts that each local assembly is self-governing and independent of all other churches and of all persons and bodies of men (sic) whatever, as to the administration of their affairs; that it is of right, and should be free from any other human authority, whether civil or ecclesiastical, and that this is the New Testament idea of church government. [4] The church where the pastor engages in ministry that operates under the tenets of self-governance in its polity and administrative functionalities presents a prescient window of opportunity.

It must be clearly borne out that any model of ministry that the researcher might develop would need to fit the distinct nature and beliefs of an independent church in all of its character, practice and orthodoxy. The researcher realizes that although she subscribes to the positive aspects of autonomy as witnessed in the Baptist tradition, she is very much aware of some of the disadvantages of such a system as these might impact leadership in the church. Robert Torbet, in his seminal work on Baptists, alludes to one of the possible negatives when he discussed the history of the early rise of Baptists in America. According to Torbet, the period of organization and growth revealed among the Baptists those problems that naturally arise in a young denomination. There were new leaders who did not always 'fit in' well. Baptist unity was disrupted frequently by sensitive reactions to changes in the social scene, as was evident in several areas. It was, more or less, a testing time for Baptists. The stability of the majority underwent a severe probationary

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[4] Edward T. Hiscox, *Principles and Practices for Baptist Churches (*Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1980), 17.

period out of which was revealed both the strength and weakness of a de-centralized polity. [5]

Whenever an organization chooses to adopt a de-centralized form of governance, rather than an Episcopal or hierarchical one, each particular community of faith bears the accountability of developing its own ways of 'doing church'. There is, therefore, within the Baptist tradition no uniform model from which the local church can draw in establishing guidelines for training lay leaders. This challenge was quite evident in the church from which the researcher received her license and ordination into the Gospel ministry. This church represented a prime example of a particular faith group that highly esteemed and espoused the principles of autonomy within the local congregation. The urban church of Mt. Pleasant Baptist Church had over eighteen lay ministries that were led by persons from the laity. However, a systematic method for the selection, development and training of lay leaders was non-existent.

The lack of any specific system for training lay leaders on how to engage in authentic ministry has caused a host of problems in the church. Studied observations of these dynamics in an autonomous context revealed several challenges. Some of these challenges that were found in the context of self-governing churches included: minimally or poorly trained lay leaders; lay leaders who were allowed to remain in their positions well past their time of effectiveness; a dearth of young lay leaders who could succeed to lay leadership in the church; an entrenched perspicacity toward authoritarian leadership within the ranks of lay leadership; a definite lack of koinonia among the lay leaders as well as among the congregants; and the delivery of ineffective and non-transformative lay

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[5] Robert Torbet, *A History of the Baptists* (Valley Forge: Judson Press, 1993), 266.

ministry programs in the church. There are many other problems that tend to result from a failure to have a cadre of lay persons who have undergone a systematic process of preparation and training on how to implement authentic ministry in the church. However, one of the most painful results rests in the idea that the congregants are not being provided with incarnational experiences through the activities that are being presented by untrained lay leaders.

It is this aspect of de-centralization about which the researcher finds herself in a quandary. How can an autonomous body of persons promote an ethos that allows for ecclesial autonomy and concomitantly within this same culture of autonomy produce a host of lay leaders who will maintain a communal focus in the implementation of ministry that might serve to result in transformation, empowerment and spiritual growth in the body of Christ? It is this dilemma that the researcher seeks to address in her proposed model of ministry that highlights a communal paradigm of lay leadership in the Baptist church which will resonate with authenticity in autonomous ecclesial settings.

In addition to a context of an autonomous polity and governance, Antioch Baptist Christian Church shares the distinction of being a community of faith that was established and founded by the researcher and her pastor spouse. The initial group of persons who united with Antioch Baptist Christian Church came with the understanding that this newly founded congregation would insist upon an emphasis on community, in addition to the other spiritual disciplines.

After the first months of existence it became apparent to the founder/pastor that the leadership that was evident within the ranks of the clergy would not be sufficient to administer the full worship life of Antioch. It was at this juncture in the evolution of

Antioch that the need for lay leaders presented itself. Yet, lay leaders who were determined to follow the traditional paradigm as postulated and practiced in many autonomous houses of faith would not accord with the principle of koinonia that was envisioned in Antioch. Thus the founder/pastor of Antioch became determined to formulate a response to the need for transformational lay leadership in the community of faith that is known as Antioch.

The pastor has always viewed herself as a practitioner of the ideals of community and as a leader who valued engagements that would engender empowerment of whole communities and individuals. However, this sense of dedication to liberation and freedom did not originate with Maxine, the pastor. There is every reason to believe that her ancestors – her parents, grandparents and great-grandparents – exhibited this same tendency towards the inclusion of all people in the struggle towards a life of equality that would serve to create and maintain a strong community.

With a mother who served as the secretary of the local A. M. E. assembly for over four decades, a father who presided as superintendent of Sunday School and grandparents who functioned as trustees and mothers of the church, it was evident that this pastor would develop traits that would translate into the needful skills and experience that would bode well in the arena of leadership within the ethos of the church. A love for the study of the word of God evidenced itself early in her life. Her immersion into education was initiated and nurtured from the perspectives of being reared in a familial environment that highly prized secular education, and Christian education from the Biblical paradigm as well as from the Methodist creeds and orthodoxy. From Bible bowl drills to speaking opportunities at the various conventions to serving as a delegate at the several Sunday

school conventions on the Ocala district of the A. M. E. church, the pastor/educator became a child of the culture of church.[6]

Autobiographical Insights

Self-disclosure of one's identify is at one and the same time a revolutionary pursuit and a humbling retrospective that ought to offer a moment for wholeness and peace within the soul. It is this concept that demonstrates the paradoxical spiritual journey that this author has undergone. Her journey represents a quixotic quagmire that juxtaposes two aspects of life in the church – a Black woman who has had to struggle valiantly in order to gain access to the ranks of ordained clergy within a patriarchal ethos and an ordained minister who must constantly strive to remain true to gender and self within the church.

The interests of this pastor in formulating a training program for lay leaders who practice transcendent ministry in the Black church grew out of her concern for the inclusion of all persons in the community in the full worship life of the church. The evils of oppression reared their heads in her life and upbringing in a small town in middle Florida. The incidences of racism and enslavement were on display in every aspect of life in a town where the majority culture perpetrated discriminatory acts against the community of Blacks who populated the quarters, the author's neighborhood.

This climate of injustice became the incubus in which this author began to claim her identity as an activist who embraced the call for liberation for all people in ways that

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[6] Maxine Waddell, *Spiritual Autobiography (*Atlanta, 2003), 4.

would serve as points of affirmation and wholeness. Not only did she experience the pain of oppression through the racist behavior that was perpetrated against her from persons of the European persuasion, she also witnessed how her particular community of kinfolks was affected by the unjust acts of oppression rendered against them. Throughout the work week, her parents and the other employed members in the small African American enclave were constantly subjected to inhumane and unjust treatment. Yet, on Sunday, these same persons whose very dignity had been subjugated would find themselves as persons who were now invited to join the community of God in full fellowship as humans. The divine construct that Jesus the Messiah had introduced into the world represented the covenant gathering that provided an atmosphere of equality and liberation for all who had previously suffered incidences of oppression and injustice.

When the inclusionist began to analyze her spiritual environment with a more critical indicia, she began to see cracks in the façade of the Black church. What she saw astounded her! She came to realize that her church community, who were the victims of injustice that was foisted upon them by the white majority, began to display the persona of the oppressors through their practice of excluding women from positions of ministry in the church.

This inclusionist/writer began to witness what she can only define as the 'silencing' of certain voices in the community of faith. The voice of persons portrays the substantive reality that people are viewed and accepted as whole persons within the community. Whenever one's voice is unheard or is forced into silence, the person ceases to exist in the life of the group.

The narrative that would speak to the identity of this pastor is full of voices. There is the voice that was replete with the oppressive dynamics of paternalism and all its accompanying issues. There was the voice of the urban faith community from which she received her call into ministry – the voices of men, women, boys and girls – that provided nurture and support to her throughout her wilderness trials as she sought to respond to God's call upon her life. Within the voice of the community, if she listened with intentionality, she could faintly decipher the sounds of silence that began to evidence themselves in the failure of transformation and spiritual maturity among the members of the community. This matter of silencing became the only remaining vestige of those whose personhood was no longer being represented and lifted up in the lay ministries and their various activities in the church.

The lived-out reality of the liturgical life of the church as portrayed in the activities of the lay ministries appeared to be the polar opposite of the Pauline-declaration that there are no Jews, or Greeks, or males or females in the house of God. The author began to understand that when persons are denied koinonia, the marginalized and excluded persons will begin to adopt the persona of de-humanized individuals. De-humanization causes persons to be more prone to accepting degrading and disrespectful treatment from others in their attempts to be allowed into community.

The discrimination that the author experienced in her 'southern cracker' hometown and the experience of the exclusion of persons from full participation in the worship life of the church represent two of the factors that propelled this author to view herself as an activist whose passion surfaced in a determination that would ensue towards liberation for all persons. A third factor that impacted this researcher/activist evolved

when she began serving as a lay leader in her former place of worship that is located in urban Atlanta.

The Context for the Ministry Model

The activist's physical context for the development of her model of ministry changed subsequent to her entry into the doctoral program at United Theological Seminary. However, the rationale for pursuing the particular ministry model arose during her tenure as minister of Christian education at Mt. Pleasant Baptist Church, a verifiable urban worship community in metropolitan Atlanta. Thus it becomes necessary for the writer to offer some insights on her previous context of ministry.

Occupying real estate in the heart of a section of Atlanta that is rapidly entering a time of re-gentrification, Mt. Pleasant exults in the fact that it is the repository of a great legacy – a pillar of strength and a source of strength for its members and the southeast Atlanta community.[7] It can reasonably be estimated that the value of unimproved and improved real estate owned by Mt. Pleasant would tally between five and ten million dollars. The geographic locale of the campus of Mt. Pleasant covers two full city blocks on both sides of the street.

Many of the residences in the 30315 zip code of Atlanta are no longer owned or in the possession of the original homeowners. The generation of persons who resided in this area in the 1940's through the 1980's has suffered incidences of demise among the people of that era. This has given rise to a proliferation of renters and to a rise in

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[7] *Church Directory: Mt. Pleasant Baptist Church* (Atlanta: Olan Mills, 1996), 2.

suburbanites among the remaining members of this era who have transferred out of the urban area. The racial/ethnic demographics of the neighborhood are eighty one per cent African American, with a median age of forty seven years. A majority of the constituents of the area consists of single parent families. The median income of the blue collar professionals and non-professional white collar persons does not exceed $14,814.00 per annum.[8]

Yet the demographics that relate the ethnicity and the economic status of the congregation of Mt. Pleasant are not fully descriptive of this urban community of faith. The tenure and leadership status of the author as the minister of Christian education at Mt. Pleasant offered her an insider's perspective on the context of lay ministry within the church. All eighteen of the lay ministries and their respective lay leaders are theoretically positioned under the minister of Christian education. However, for all practical purposes, it is the Pastor who exercised and engaged in full governance and control of all of the lay ministries. That is, the initiation of all activities and projects that were to be implemented by the lay ministries were those that had been suggested, directed and put forth by the Pastor of the church. The primary mode of operation within the lay ministries was that of pastoral authority. The Pastor, and not the lay leaders, functioned as the head of all of the lay ministries. This exercise of authority is tantamount to a nullification of lay leadership and it serves as a weapon of disempowerment of the respective lay leaders. The reasoning that was put forth for this method of authoritarianism lay in the province that the lay leaders had not been properly trained in the planning and implementation of ministry activities that would fit the parameters of the vision, mission and ethos of the church.

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[8] *Community Demographics (*New York: UMC Publishers, 2003), 5.

Before this author could adequately engage the lay leaders in a comprehensive training program at her former church association, her tenure as minister of Christian education came to an end. She departed from this church and commenced upon the path of founding and serving as the pastor of Antioch Baptist Christian Church. It was at ABCC that she began to move with intentionality upon the task of establishing a lay leadership program that would resonate with the vision of God, the mission of the church and the experiential dynamics of the people of God. It is out of this background of departure and new beginnings that the significance of a trained cadre of lay leaders began to come into fruition.

February 1, 2004 became the date of the commencement of the community that is known as Antioch Baptist Christian Church. Reverend Maxine Waddell responded to the claim of God on her life in the area of pastoral leadership after having engaged in ardent prayer and struggle with the Divine. She and her husband, Reverend A. D. Waddell, stepped out on faith and under the unction of the Holy Spirit began the process of founding Antioch Baptist Christian Church. There existed the Biblical awareness that it was in Antioch that the believers were first called Christians.[9]

It was, however, divine revelation from the text of Acts 13, verse 1 that served as confirmation to the author that God had called her to become a pastor. 'Now in the church that was in Antioch, there were certain prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul.' According to a hermeneutical definition of this verse one can readily note the presence of diverse persons who became members of this community of

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[9] Acts 11:26

Antioch. Added to this interesting exegetical point is the fact that Antioch was a community of faith where the kerygmatic gifts of prophecy (proclamation) and teaching occupied positions of primacy in the worship life of Antioch. The study of the Word of God, the inclusion of persons from varied socio-economic, ethnic and political dimensions, the delineation of persons who served in lay leadership and the mention of the great theologian of the New Testament in an appositive manner served to propound a sense of call for the establishment of a church family.

Without fanfare or publicity, fifteen persons joined Pastors Maxine and A. D. Waddell in their home in Decatur, Georgia, on that momentous Sunday morning in February 2004 for worship. The occasion became a moment in history that would mark the impetus and commencement of a people of God who would forever repose their founding through the employment of the following Biblical pronouncement, '*It was the first Sabbath being the first day of the second month of the year two thousand and four years after the coming of the Messiah Jesus Christa that Antioch Baptist Christian Church was birthed into the annals of history.*'[10]

When the invitation for Christian discipleship was extended during the initial worship opportunity, ten persons decided to become active members of Antioch. Since that first day of worship God has continued to increase the number of persons who call Antioch their home, averaging three (3) persons per month until the membership presently totals fifty persons.

The community of Antioch experienced great joy when Reverend A. D. Waddell, the spouse of the author, made a conscious decision to unite with Antioch on the

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[10]Maxine Waddell, *Sermon: God & Antioch* (Atlanta: 2004).

following Sunday. The membership heartily approves and affirms the pastoral leadership of Pastor Maxine Waddell and Pastor A. D. Waddell. It was a welcome and exciting call of God that each would bear the mantle of pastor. This divine pronouncement provided a visible representation of koinonia, community, inclusion, diversity as well as a concretized revelation of God in the manifold reality of the Triune God.

The summary of the clergy leadership of Antioch is resident in the fact that Reverend Maxine Waddell serves as the Pastor of Antioch *and* Reverend A. D. Waddell also serves as the Pastor of Antioch. Each is encouraged to operate in her/his unique gifts of ministry and in the call to the pastorate. The members of this community are blessed to be able to hear two distinct voices in the delivery of ministry from within the dimension of the ordained clergy.

The physical location of ABCC remained in the Dekalb County residence of the Pastors for nearly fifteen months. The entire bottom level of their tri-level home was re-configured into a sanctuary for the people of God. This period of worship in the personal residence of the pastors proved to be quite impactful towards the creation of a spirit of kinship and koinonia among the persons who attend Antioch.

On May 1, 2005, the sanctuary was relocated to a locale that was outside the home of the Pastors, yet not into a traditional stand-alone edifice. The present sanctuary is situated in a multi-level commercial building in the west end area of urban Atlanta. The 30310 zip code and geographical area that surround the present location of Antioch is similar to that which continues to exists for Mt. Pleasant Baptist Church in southeast Atlanta. The differences are evident in the fact that the homes in the 30310 zip code are a mixture of apartments and single-family dwellings. The median income of the workers in

this area amounts to $10,100 per annum; and the quota of one-parent households approximates seventy five per cent. [11] The evidences of poverty, under-employment and unemployment in the area cannot be hidden.

There are six houses of worship within a two mile radius of the church. Baptist, Church of God in Christ, Presbyterian and Methodist congregations are represented in the neighborhood. The commercial building that serves as the first floor home to Antioch is also occupied by two other churches.

Despite the lack of longevity in existence, all indicators are that the religious ethos of Antioch causes her to be identified as an urban church as defined by the parameters of United Theological Seminary's focus group marker, Christian Education and Urban Ministry. Antioch Baptist Christian Church was borne out of a need for worship experiences that authentically proclaimed the Gospel of how God in and through the Person of Jesus Christ is being incarnated in the lives of all of the believers in the body that is called the church. Those who have established their alignment with Antioch confessed a need for inclusion in community. Their desire remains one that is recited in the refrain of the members, "All we want is to be able to experience God and to allow God to hear our personal and communal voices in our praise and witness of our faith in Jesus Christ."[12] It is the desire of the worshipers that they be included in the koinonia of God and the koinonia of fellowship with the members of the family of God.

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[11] Maxine Waddell, *Demographics Study, 2005* (Atlanta: Antioch, 2005), 13.

[12] Maxine Waddell, *Spiritual Autobiography* (Atlanta: Antioch, 2003), 23.

In the early church koinonia implied fellowship, participation, communion; the relationships experienced by believers with God, Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit and among themselves. [13] The believers in Antioch are desirous of including the diversity of the community in the liturgical life, the missionary work and the various ministry areas of the church as well as in the polity and governance of the church.

The vision of God for Antioch Baptist Christian Church is that she is to engage in the journey of becoming a church of Jubilee. The image of a church of Jubilee will be demonstrated and actualized by: 1) worship of the Triune God: God the Creator, God the Savior and God the Holy Spirit; 2) a commitment on the part of each person to work with intentionality towards creating and maintaining a culture that is permeated with the notions of liberation, transformation and the empowerment of all persons in the community and 3) a steadfast concern for insuring that the community of Antioch practices the principles of koinonia. Antioch will seek to accomplish this vision through authentic worship of God on all occasions when the people of God gather by glorifying God, lifting up Jesus, being sensitive to the Holy Spirit and empowering the community of faith.

The People in Antioch Baptist Christian Church

The believers in Antioch Baptist Christian Church have enjoyed more than one year of existence as a worshipping body of faith. This time of being together as a visible community of the body of Christ has served to provide an interesting historiography

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[13] Donald McKim, *Westminster Dictionary of Theological Terms* (Louisville: Westminster Press, 1996), 154.

about how God initiates divine action and how the people of Antioch have interacted with God during these divine encounters.

The members of Antioch have all experienced a journey of discipleship that can best be represented by the terms of abounding spirituality, awesome hope and commitment to community. These terms are apropos, given the personal and communal struggles that the members of Antioch have endured over the past months. Some of the challenges which presented themselves and continue to appear were: issues of death and dying; gerontological matters; how to discontinue participation in negative and de-humanizing relationships; how to develop a wholistic ethic of life that brings balance in their lives; how to maintain spiritual and moral integrity; and how to insure that the aspects of community are prominently regarded and practiced in the full worship life of the church.

From the very first day of assembling together, the body of believers in Antioch was insistent upon making every occasion an opportunity for worship. This attitude of worship has enabled the congregation to remain focused on why God called Antioch into existence and why God continues to bless and empower Antioch in so many ways. The gratitude of the assembly to God is evidenced on every occasion that they gather.

The membership has experienced macro-growth in the more recent months of her existence as a worshipping body of Christ. Fourteen family units are represented in Antioch, each with its own distinctive social and relational composition – single parent, dual parent, couples and singles. The population of Antioch is a diverse one in terms of familial upbringings, ecclesial backgrounds, education, income, worship styles and ideology. However, one of the overriding theological underpinnings that binds all of the

members of Antioch together is the profound belief in God as God has been revealed in and through the Person of Jesus Christ. A secondary, but equally important facet is the desire for full inclusion of all persons in the ministry, mission and life of the church. The members are passionate, impassioned and earnest in their zeal to insure that each person in the community is allowed the freedom necessary to become full stakeholders in the worship life of Antioch.

Each person who voluntarily determined to associate themselves with Antioch brought with them their own experiences of being in and manifesting the ideals of church. These experiences were reflected in the members' participation or lack thereof, in the various aspects of church life in their previous ecclesial settings. Thus, the wealth of gifts and talents are quite evident in the body of Antioch.

It is noteworthy that when asked to complete the Congregational Involvement Survey, [14] several persons indicated that their participation in the activities of the lay ministries during their prior church association had decreased or ceased. The rationale for these responses was varied. However, over fifty percent (50%) of the respondents listed their reason as the failure of the ministries to deliver activities that addressed their needs and concerns. Fifteen percent (15%) of the respondents replied that their participation remained the same because they felt a need to be involved out of a sense of traditionalism. Twenty five percent (25%) indicated a reduction in their participation in the lay ministries resulted from a perceived inability of the lay leaders to implement programs that were communally-oriented and spiritually transformative. The remaining ten percent (10%) showed that they had developed an adverse attitude towards church

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[14] Appendix A.

when a dynamic of authoritarianism seemed to pervade all tiers of leadership in the church. These factors are not the sole arbiters that resonated in the lack of participation in the ministries, projects and activities in the former church affiliations. It is quite informative that there was a wide array of rationale for the choices that members made in decreasing their participation in the church.

Upon association with Antioch, each member is afforded the opportunity of completing a Gifts Inventory[15]. A personal consultation is also scheduled with the pastors. These involvements, along with prayer and guidance from the Holy Spirit, serve to evince possible areas of giftedness where each person might function best in Antioch. As a result of these ground breaking actions, four lay ministries came into fruition in Antioch: the ministry of administration, the ministry of hospitality, the ministry of Christian education and the ministry of missions. Working documents that recite the vision, the mission, duties, areas of responsibility and protocol have been developed for each ministry.

The four lay ministries of Antioch have begun to serve with intentionality in their pursuit of delivering activities and programs that are in conformity with the vision, the mission and the community of Antioch. One example of this intentionality in doing transformative communal ministry can be found in the ministry of Christian education. The ministry of Christian education, with input from the community, determined to expand the dynamics of Sunday school from a traditional model of following the standard curriculum of quarterlies to one of employing a lectionary method of study. A name change from Sunday school to Church school became a crucial part of this evolution. The

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[15] *Wagner-Modified Houts Questionnaire* (Denver: Gospel Light Publishers, 1995).

lectionary style of study in Church school has afforded the members the chance to engage in a practice of critical examination of the Bible as viewed through the lens of the liturgical year. The facilitators of this pedagogical session in Church school have used the new format to challenge the students to become more informed readers of the Word of God.

The career dynamics of the members of Antioch are shown in the stratums that flow from high-powered professionals to blue-collar associates to the underemployed to the unemployed. All of these occupations are fully present in the congregation of worshippers in Antioch. The diversity in careers allows for a greater range of gifts, skills and experiences that are available for employment in the full life of the church.

The worshipers in Antioch travel from all quadrants of the greater metropolitan area of Atlanta to arrive at the sanctuary. Yet none of these persons have to travel more than thirty minutes to arrive for worship. This equi-distance of proximity for the members of Antioch invites participation from the congregation in the weekly worship opportunities of Sunday church school and worship, Tuesday night Christian education hour, mid-week prayer services, weekend enrichment occasions and quarterly community celebrations.

In addition to an emphasis on worship, the congregants are persuaded that they need to demonstrate the Presence of Jesus Christ in the larger world by assisting in the provision of love to others. As a result of the ministry of missions, Antioch has taken advantage of opportunities to minister to persons residing in Zimbabwe, Africa through the provision of Bibles which are written in their indigenous languages.

The presence of four lay ministries in Antioch opened up the need for persons from the laity who could prophetically and diligently offer leadership that would interpret the vision, the mission and the ethos of the community. The importance of a prophetic-communal tier of lay leadership has become crucial to the continued spiritual growth of Antioch. Thus, the significance for the author's ministry project became quite evident.

The presenter of this ministry model has been involved in a life journey that has been both enriching and challenging. She has consistently trumpeted the value of Christian education as a central component within the church. Her concerns proceed from an understanding that Christian education should be proclaimed in ways that are theologically rooted and communally-oriented. When Christian education is made transparent in ways that encompass the wisdom of God, the ecclesial perspective and the circle of community, then the kingdom of God will become more possible for the world.

A radical spirit of empowerment that transcends conventional thoughts on freedom has been promulgated in the lay ministries of Antioch. Each ministry is encouraged to take the call and charge to serve the church as a divine undertaking. It, therefore, became necessary for this researcher/pastor/theologian/activist/Christian educator to formulate a training program for the lay leaders that is comprised of spiritual intentionality, ecclesial emphasis and communal involvement in ways that would determine a new paradigm for the proclamation of the Gospel.

Of equal importance for the development of a lay leader training protocol is the reality that the future of Antioch is one that is replete with monumental spiritual and numerical growth. If Antioch is to truly become a church of God's Jubilee, then it is incumbent upon all to have a blue-print for training future lay leaders. As the adage so

aptly states, "You either establish a plan for success or you plan to fail."[16] The divine investment in Antioch has been too awesome to leave to chance the continuation of God's community of faith that is known as Antioch Baptist Christian Church.

Summary

Antioch Baptist Christian Church, founded in February 2004, has maintained an insistence on communion with the Triune God, common unity with the church and koinonia with each other since her inception. There is no doubt that there will be continuing emphasis upon each of these tenets in the years to come.

Although the author of this document is new to the pastorate, her experience in ordained ministry has been in existence for nearly ten years. During this time she has had the opportunity to view ministry, especially lay ministry, from an insider's perspective. She came to the conclusion that lay ministries are invaluable resources in the life of the church. However, all too often, full appreciation of the value that these lay ministries bring to the life of the community is not celebrated or embraced. One way in which the church could celebrate lay ministries is by developing a rigorous and challenging regimen of training that would equip the lay ministries to actually do 'kingdom business' with their vast pools of gifts, talents and skills.

The belief of this pastor is that if Antioch is to fulfill the call of God in her life, there is an urgent need to put in a place a system that formalizes the training of lay leaders. Such a system should be in line with the vision of God for Antioch. It should

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[16] Anonymous.

maintain a conjunction with the mission of the church and it should possess the requisite standards that demonstrate empowerment, transformation and liberation for the people of God.

In Chapter one the writer has offered: a discussion which addressed the ministry model that will be proffered in this project; a delineation of the autobiographical insights of the author; and an explication of the context where the study originates. Finally the author announced the points of commonality that would serve to explain how her particular insights and ecclesial context coalesced to provide a synergy from which a model of ministry might be developed that would engender a response to the matter of properly trained lay leaders in Antioch Baptist Christian Church.

CHAPTER TWO

THE STATE OF THE ART

The redactor of the manuscript of Ecclesiastes intoned a truthful statement with the following quote, "What has been is what will be and what has been done is what will be done; there is nothing new under the sun."[1] This is absolutely a revelatory understanding about life in general and church life in particular. It is out of this precept that the researcher will emphasize existing ministry designs that bear some similarities to her proposed model of ministry. The information that is presented in this chapter will be focused on a discussion of relevant concepts and models of ministry that might pertain to the dynamics of lay leadership, the training of lay leaders and how these leaders implement ministry to the church.

In the greater metropolitan area of Atlanta, Georgia, the prevalence of mega-churches is quite obvious. Memberships that number from two thousand persons upwards to twenty-five thousand or more are quite familiar on the ecclesial landscape of Atlanta. Several of the mega-churches have been deliberate in sponsoring and presenting leadership training seminars for their lay leaders. Although, these churches have been able to produce a sound body of work in this area of ministry, there is a dearth of written publications that would serve to document their work. Notwithstanding this lack of written documentation, some of the larger churches have taken the opportunity to record their efforts in church records for the sake of replication within their own context of

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[1] Ecclesiastes 1:9

worship. It is to these written internal records that the researcher will refer in her discussion of the State of the Art.

An urban church that is located in the heart of Atlanta, Mount Pleasant Baptist Church began to make a concerted effort to offer training to its lay leaders beginning in the year 2003. This researcher served as the minister of Christian education during this time. She had observed the ineffective delivery of ministry by the eighteen lay ministries at the church. On Wednesday, April 23, 2003, this researcher introduced seven areas of training for the church's lay ministries.

Subsequent to this meeting, she convened a lay ministry dialogue in order to allow the ministry leaders of the church to discuss ministry training. The consensus of the Christian education community was that this would be an opportunity to listen and to note areas of concern.

This session was attended by lay leaders, by persons who desired to become active in lay ministry and by members of the general congregation. This session became the first opportunity for the researcher to practice the hearing-into-speech process. It became apparent that what was needed was a strategic training system for the lay leaders. The lay leaders expressed a sincere desire to engage in ministry. However, many persons admitted that they did not know what to do or how to proceed.

As a result of the ministry dialogue, the minister of Christian education and the Board of Christian Education determined to initiate a program of comprehensive training for the lay leaders. The training would provide the lay leaders with the skills that would enable them to begin practicing transformative ministry in the church.

It was reasoned that a model of intensive training would prove beneficial for the initial training. Training sessions that would be convened over a short period of time would secure the benefits of generating and maintaining interest among the leaders.

A four-session training regimen was formulated, with the first of these sessions occurring on August 4, 2003. The focus of this session was 'Building Community'. The subsequent sessions that were conducted during the remainder of the month of August centered on the topics of 'Discipline that Promotes Community', 'Mission, Missional Statements and Community', and 'Unity in the Community'. [2] Each of these seminars employed a written curriculum, stated objectives and an evaluation document. Five seminary trained ministers officiated as the facilitators for each of the training sessions.

The researcher played the lead role in the development and implementation of lay leadership training at MPBC. Although she was released from her position as minister of Christian education at MPBC, she retained a brief scripted record of the training program. From the responses to the evaluation that was administered by the researcher/minister of Christian education at the end of the sessions, the lay leaders affirmed the need for training regimen that would instruct them on how to proceed in the implementation of transformative ministry projects.

Abundant Life Church was founded and established by Pastor Woodrow Walker in the early 1980's as an interdenominational ministry whose organizational aim was to maintain a sense of purpose as a church without becoming involved in connectionalism, conventions or nay other authoritarian set of parameters. Thus, the church of Abundant Life has the appearance of an autonomous community of worship. The Pastor was the

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[2] Maxine Waddell, *Intensive Training at Mount Pleasant* (Atlanta: 2003), 1-20.

only person who served in called ministry. When the church began to experience explosive numerical growth, the church began to focus on formulating a program that would aid the church in identifying leaders from among the laity. L.I.F.E. Discovery Seminar, [3] a Christian education model of ministry, was begun in 1987 by this church. The essence of the program included lay leadership training under the theme of 'servant hood'. It is uncertain as to whether Abundant Life Church has continued this model of training or whether it has created another version. However, what is apparent is the evidence of a community that has been able to move out into the surrounding areas and have an impact in the public sector of education and social justice in the greater Atlanta area. The lay ministries of ALC have been proactive in providing support to several urban communities whose needs ranged from food, clothing and other life essentials. The researcher surmises that the lay leadership program which ALC devised and implemented served as a foundation for their continued work in the areas of social justice.

During the spring of 2004, a course entitled Practice of Ministry was taught at Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois. According to the syllabus, "This was a course in practical ecclesiology, meaning that the course deals with the core practices in ecclesial communities. The catalytic practice for any community is the practice of leadership." [4] A cursory glance at the curriculum for this course reveals that the discipline was developed for persons who serve in either called ministry or lay ministry. A decided emphasis on koinonia can be discerned from the syllabus. From all appearances, the

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[3] Woodrow Walker, *New Members' Training* (Atlanta: ALC Press, 1988), iv.

[4] *Practice of Ministry, Spring 2004* (garrott.nwu/coursematerial/02004-3).

reading material and required texts for the course run the gamut in the areas of worship, community care, theological concepts and experiential practices in the ecclesial domain.

One of the more promising endeavors in the area of leadership has come out of the Pohly Center in Dayton, Ohio. Kenneth Pohly, the founder of the center, offers theological insight on the discipline of ministry in leadership formation in his book, *Transforming the Rough Places: The Ministry of Supervision.* [5]

Although this book was primarily developed for use by pastors and persons in called ministry, the Pohly Center presented an Equipping Church Event in April 2005 that sought the attendance of lay leaders among many others. The objectives of the one-day conference included: 1) equipping church leaders to release the potential within their people for service in the church and world; 2) engaging a fresh way of thinking about bringing new people into the church and how to care for and disciple them once they come; 3) preparing churches and church leaders for the challenge of growth before it occurs; and 4) providing practical tools for equipping people for ministry. The key principles that were to be presented during the conference reflected on the issues of community and how to equip people for communal ministry.[6]

The Help 4 NonProfits & Tribes Institute deserves a mention in this section. Although this organization is primarily associated with the secular realm of society, the teachings that it provides for non-profit leaders could be re-interpreted for use by the lay leaders in the church. The Help 4 NonProfits & Tribes Institute sponsored a work shop that targeted the issue of how community non-profit leaders could more effectively

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[5] Kenneth Pohly, *Transforming the Rough Places: The Ministry of Supervision* (Franklin, Tennessee: Providence House Publishers, 2001), iv.

[6] Ibid., 2.

produce success in the communities, according to their understanding of community. Despite the fact that the conference was designed mainly for employment in the non-profit world, the approach regarding the aspects of community and how leaders can engender transformation in the community would prove beneficial for the church.[7]

Gary Gunderson, the Director of the Interfaith Health Program at the Rollins School of Public Health at Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia, maintains responsibility for a national program that mobilizes faith groups around a broad range of health issues. He has been particularly insightful in his attempts to urge the faith community to become more involved in the fights against some of the many pandemic diseases that have the potential of decimating whole populations of people. One of these traumatic diseases is HIV-AIDS.

In making his argument for more radical participation from the faith community, Dr. Gunderson indicated that there is a pressing need for the evolution of what he terms 'boundary leaders'. Although the word 'boundary' carries with it the definitions of limitedness and endings, Dr. Gunderson re-interprets boundary to mean the capacity or area that exists outside the established lines or outside of whatever has been termed the standards. It is the boundary leader, according to Dr. Gunderson, who is absolutely conscious of her own identity and who emphatically knows that she has been created to work outside the 'lines' that place them in alien territory. The more expansive definition of a boundary leader is: an individual who refuses to be limited by existing organizations and networks; one who never allows myths and status quo's to limit their search to provide assistance to others; a person who thinks globally and locally and specifically applies leadership principles and plans to both immediate and distant need; a conscious

[7] Help4nonprofits.com, accessed on November 17, 2004.

thinker who grasps the concept that a boundary is exactly not where things separate, but the edge of where things join.[8]

The model of leadership that is explicated in Dr. Gunderson's work possesses a similarity to that of the author of this dissertation. The challenge for leaders is being able to harness the commitment and energy to address the issues of the persons whom they serve. This is no less the situation in the communities of faith, than in the medical arena. When one considers the fact that faith communities are required to struggle with the gargantuan issues of God and humanity; death and dying; suffering, soteriology and other issues that relate to all of humankind, it can be posited that lay leaders should strive to become boundary leaders.

Carlyle Fielding Stewart III serves as the Pastor of Hope United Methodist Church in Southfield, Michigan. Reverend Stewart sets forth one of the more profound premises for the need of quality lay leaders in the church.

> "The purpose of the church is simple: the church exists to bring people to salvation in Christ, and to positively and permanently change lives for the good of the community. The way the church fulfills this basic calling is through *empowerment*, endowing people with the capacity to be recipients and catalysts of positive social and personal change."[9]

This theologian uses this definition of the ecclesia in order to formulate a model of ministry that could be utilized to meet the objectives of empowerment. The model of ministry is termed 'empowerment' because it emphasizes spiritual, cultural and individual transformation as bases for church growth and development.

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[8] Gary Gunderson, *Boundary Leaders* (Minneapolis: Augsberg Press, 2004), 8-10.

[9] Carlyle Fielding Stewart III, *The Empowerment Church* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2001), 15.

In his book, Reverend Stewart makes a pointed reference to the inclusion of lay leaders as persons who are instrumental in working in the empowerment model of ministry. Laity should become empowered to lead God's people. In order to do this effectively, Reverend Stewart opines that lay leaders should be involved in spiritual training and development courses that would qualify them to assume leadership in the church. It is his premise that many churches are undergoing leadership crises where laity is not equipped to provide the proper leadership in kingdom building. Criteria for leadership, other than membership in the local assembly, must be implemented if churches are to be spiritually revitalized. The crucial question that Reverend Stewart lifts up is, "How can God be pleased with churches when people are allowed to serve and lead and have not qualified for such important leadership positions?"

The developer of this ministry model agrees with Reverend Stewart in his proposal for a systematized training process for lay leaders. However, the basic requirements of his program do not go far enough in insuring that lay leaders are equipped to serve the people of God. His system emphasizes a curriculum that instructs lay leaders on how to develop a devotional life, on consistent tithing from lay leaders and on their attitudes for service. Without a doubt these notable attributes are needed in lay leaders. Therefore, one cannot offer an argument against the inclusion of these in a training program. However, if a model of ministry is to truly demonstrate and actualize empowerment to the people of God, a training program must be structured in ways that would delve more deeply into the challenges and obstacles that oftentimes prevent others from attaining empowerment and transformation in their lives.

Summary

Undoubtedly there are other faith communities and institutions who understand the need for having a trained level of leaders in their midst. The narrative documentation that was presented in Chapter Two clearly attests to this fact. Even without the presentation of an overwhelming number of examples, it can easily be demonstrated that the faith community must begin to take seriously the matter of lay leadership training.

Yet, the dilemma still remains that far too many autonomous churches continue to maintain an insistence that the only qualification that lay leaders need is to have their names on the membership roll of the church. The state of the art in these houses of worship has not risen to the level of concern that would insist upon a structured program of training for said lay leaders that is infused with spirituality and care for the people of God.

It is this author's belief that all have been called to live out the Christological mandate to tend to the sheep of God. This is no less a call upon the lay leaders. Given the serious implications that might result from a failure to respond, churches must begin to put in place training for lay leaders.

There is an insistent call upon all who are members of the body to become equipped in doing ministry. The doctrine of the priesthood of all believers serves as affirmation of this dynamic responsibility. Despite the seeming dearth of lay leadership training in many autonomous churches, other denominations have already begun to implement lay leadership training programs.

The Christological mandate is clear. Those who would respond to the call to be servants are charged with the task of tending the sheep of God. However, the call to tend the sheep is also a call to become trained on how to be a caretaker of the sheep. The servants must become persons who are fearless in responding to the wholistic needs of the sheep.

CHAPTER THREE

THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

When the redactor of the book of Acts commenced the divine undertaking of scripting the Good News as announced in the Lukan manuscript, it was done within the parameters of a reasoned and serious prism of research. According to the Biblical text as cited in the first chapter of Luke, verses one through four: "Since many have undertaken to set down an orderly account of the events that have been fulfilled among us, just as they were handed on to us by those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and servants of the word, I too decided, after investigating everything carefully from the first, to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, so that you may know the truth concerning the things about which you have been instructed."[1] This same attitude and sense of concern as demonstrated in the Gospel of Luke is the one that is being introduced by this researcher in the development of a model of ministry that might address the issue of lay leadership that seeks to empower the community of God in the church.

The researcher is fully cognizant of the various traditional and contemporary constructs that have been undertaken by institutions in the political, corporate, economic and commercial fields in their attempts to offer responses to the matter of transformative leadership. Suffice it to say, that each of the aforementioned world systems are based on foundational platforms that are aligned with the criteria inherent to their particular

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[1] Luke 1:1-2

discipline. Therefore, it is incumbent upon this researcher to posit the theoretical foundations which support the proposed model of ministry that will serve as a response to the issue of how to train and develop lay leaders in the church who are enabled to provide empowering and transformative ministry.

The presentation of the theoretical foundations for the suggested model of ministry will proceed from an analysis of pericopae that are taken from the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament that directly, or by inference, address the issue of the need for trained lay leaders. Subsequent to the presentation of the Biblical foundation, a discussion of the theological system that supports the proposed model of ministry will be documented. Finally, the researcher will lay out a discourse on the historical perspective that has been employed within the Christian communities in order to grapple with the challenge of how to insure the presence of efficacious lay leadership in the church.

Biblical Foundation

The need for selecting non-clergy persons from the larger community to assume positions of leadership, that included the entrusting of the sacred responsibility of insuring that the needs and concerns of the people of God were being addressed in appropriate ways, is found in an inchoate state in the eighteenth chapter of Exodus, beginning with verse thirteen and terminating at verse twenty-three. Although the discussion of the Hebrew Bible text will primarily be concentrated on verses thirteen through twenty-three, it is necessary for the researcher to analyze and outline the text that surrounds these verses.

An outline that would offer a clue into the hypothesis of the need for trained lay leadership in the congregation can be structured in the following manner:

Exodus 18: 1	The introduction and identification of Jethro as the priest of Midian and as the father-in-law of Moses;
Exodus 18: 2-6	A succinct comment that resolves the contradiction of why Jethro, who is not a direct recipient of liberation from Egyptian bondage, is at Mount Sinai with those who are the recipients of freedom; a delineation of the members of Moses' family: his wife Zipporah, his two sons – Gershom and Eliezer;
Exodus 18: 7	A recitation of the greeting spoken between Moses and Jethro;
Exodus 18: 8-9	A recounting of the acts of liberation that the Lord had performed on behalf of the Israelites; Jethro expresses gratitude to the Lord for the liberation;
Exodus 18: 10-12	Jethro responds in a sacerdotal (priestly) manner by bringing burnt offerings and sacrifices to God;
Exodus 18: 13-16-	Moses sits as the solitary judge of the six hundred thousand plus people as he legislates, ad hoc, case by case, all the matters that the people bring to him;[2]

[2] Wayne Meeks, editor, *Harper Collins Study Bible* (New York: HarperCollins, 1989), 2.

Exodus 18: 17-23	Jethro proposes a judicial model that would involve the employment of men drawn from the whole of Israel;
Exodus 18: 24-26	Moses adopts and implements Jethro's proposal with apparent success.

The formational context of the people of Israel as cited in the Exodus text parallels that of a newly founded church in an urban setting. There exist several points of commonality between Israel's contextual position and the context of Antioch Baptist Christian Church. One commonality can be demonstrated by the fact that the people of God, who will later become known as Israel–a formalized and structured nation with a regimented system of laws and polity–are at this juncture in history, no more than a loose confederation of twelve tribes, whose numbers have been estimated to approximate between six hundred thousand military men (not counting the women and children)[3]. All of these are under the leadership of Moses. This depiction of the people of God at the incipient stages of becoming organized into a community of God resembles the institutional landscape that is found in newly established urban churches.

The beginning stage of any recently founded group is replete with incidences of reliance upon one major personality for demonstrations of leadership in all facets of community life. However, when the predominant leader becomes overwhelmed by the number of concerns that are being raised by the people, there arises a precipitous moment in the life of the community–the need to seek out others who will be trained on how to lead the people in ways that insure their continued quest for liberation, empowerment and

[3] Numbers 1:46

transformation. This is the dilemma that is documented in Exodus 18:13-23, and which is also present in Antioch Baptist Christian Church.

Moses, the divinely appointed human deliverer, and the Israelites have arrived at the mountain of God, Mount Sinai. The exodus from Egyptian bondage is a very recent memory where the Israelites have just completed the trek through the wilderness of Sin and they have defeated the Amalekites.

A precise reading of the text reveals that there are no textual problems within the narrative. The Masoretic version does not offer any clues that would demonstrate a variation from the text as shown in the New Revised Standard Version, the New Jerusalem Bible, the King James version or the New International Version. Consistency seems to be the prevailing principle with all of the above-cited versions. Thus, the text does not present any textual challenges, which leads one to surmise that what is documented in each of these versions is closely representative of the oral form of the narrative.

However, there are certain external evidences that would allow for the presupposition that the redactor of the text may have relied on other sources from within the Hebrew Bible to pen the Exodus narrative. The text that is under consideration seems to incorporate a variety of what might be termed as independent sources. [4] As pertaining to the appointment of persons from the community to function as leaders among the people, the Deuteronomic author in Numbers 11:10-17 and verses 24-30, details how the LORD encouraged Moses to select seventy of the elders of Israel, upon whom the LORD would deposit some of the spirit that was on Moses. This divine request resulted from

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[4] Wayne Meeks, editor, *Harper Collins Study Bible* (New York: HarperCollins, 1989), 78.

Moses' lament to the LORD that the Israelites had become too burdensome for him to bear alone. The chronicler in the book of 2 Chronicles, chapter nineteen, verses five through eleven, details a narrative in which King Jehosophat of Judah endeavored to delegate judicial authority to officials whom he appointed throughout the kingdom. [5] Although these passages as presented in the books of Numbers and 2 Chronicles, however, are not the subject of this discussion it is important to consider the possibility that the redactor of the Exodus narrative might have employed a conflation process whereby she combined the Numbers and 2 Chronicles stories in order to arrive at the story as provided in the eighteenth chapter of Exodus.

The genre of the narrative, or story telling, of the text of Exodus 18, reveals the perspective that the setting of life from which this text proceeded was consonant with that of a group of persons who were struggling to maintain a hold on freedom. It would be presumptuous to reckon this gathering of persons as a community in the strictest sense of the word. A more apt description of this group of individuals might be postulated by the Hebrew word that is transliterated in English as *kahal.*[6] This Hebrew word captures the essence of an assembly of persons who have been convoked for a special reason. These émigrés who are responding to God's call upon their lives are in the midst of relocating from a geographical, spatial, spiritual and social ethos of bondage to one of liberation. Before these persons can fully realize and embrace a cultus of freedom, the Divine Liberator has cause them to gather at the mountain of God in an effort to commence forging them into a nation of people with a structured and formal organization. This

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[5] Ibid., 670.

[6] F. Brown, *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon* (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 2000), 874.

appears to be a fairly standard procedure of how persons transition from the abnormal ethos of bondage into a normality of liberation.

A further reasoned reading of the text reveals that the life setting of the narrative is also imbedded in the dynamics of another social structure – a familial relationship between Moses, Jochebed his wife and their two sons – Gershom and Eliezer. Although Moses and Jochebed have been in covenant relationship for some period of time, it is evident that the necessary indicia of a true and authentic family unit have not been realized. Throughout the tenure of Moses' leadership of the children of Israel, the Exodus narrative evinces the notion that Jochebed. Gershom and Eliezer have been residing with Jethro, the paternal ancestor of Jochebed.

Here is an assembly of persons who are on the verge of departing a life of oppression by moving into a loose knit group of newly-freed persons. Additionally, a loose familial relationship exists in the Jochebed/Moses genealogy. These two factors serve to describe the Sitz Im Leben [7] of this text as one that is concerned with producing, shaping and developing an authentic community of relational persons. These persons will eventually be entrusted with the vision and mission of God which will be unique to them.

When one dissects the contemporary journey of the beginning and the founding of a community of faith in the urban context there is ample evidence of similitude and commonality with that of the people of God in the Exodus story. In a like manner, the individuals who agree to band together in order to become the foundation of a new church community find themselves struggling with and working on ways of how to transcend the move from disconnectedness to a dynamic of bonding that would lead to

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[7] John Hayes and Carl R. Holladay, *Biblical Exegesis: A Beginner's Handbook* (Atlanta: John Knox Publishers, 1987), 83.

authentic community. One of the ways in which community is created and built into a strong cohesive unit is through the dynamics of leadership, in particular leadership that maintains an insistence on responding to the needs of the community in ways that will insure that the vision and mission of the group are achieved.

Moses is the anointed leader, the one through whom God chose to mediate the law of God and guidance for the people. The source of the law is God and the source of absolute leadership is God. However, it is through Moses the person that both of these are transmitted to the people. The gathering at the mountain of Sinai depicts a time in the life of these freed persons when the needs of the community–instructions on how to live with each other; wisdom on how to relate to YHWH and the settlement of disputes among themselves – were not being met in an efficacious manner where Moses has been serving as the sole arbiter of all of the disputes. He has also been the only person who was authorized to dispense the laws of YHWH that would enable this group of nearly six hundred thousand men to develop a personal and covenantal relationship with YHWH.[8]

The lengthy process that Moses employed for instructing the people on how to live in community and on how to be in relation with YHWH was wearing out both the people and the leader. Jethro enters this situation with a suggestion that perhaps came from his experiences as a priestly leader to the Midianites. Jethro has experienced leadership that allows him to know the burdens of trying to do things in a solitary way.

The plan that Jethro, who is pictured as an efficiency expert, offers is one that proposes a modification to the existing paradigm of Israel's present structure of leadership. The composition of Jethro's solution involved the creation of a layer of

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[8] Frank Gaebelein, General Editor, *The Expositor's Bible Commentary Volume 2* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing, 1990), 411.

leaders who would serve as assistants to Moses. In this manner, Moses would be less likely to suffer burn-out. Concomitantly this plan would also meet the requirement of insuring that the needs of the people were being met in a timely and efficient manner. Moses, however, would retain a two-fold leadership office: as an advocate on behalf of the people to God (verse19) and as an interpreter on behalf of God to teach the people (verse 19).[9]

The appearance is given that Moses autocratically chose this staff of leaders, however, the actual election was the work of the people. This manner of communal election of the leaders is explicated in Moses' sermonic recapitulation of the exodus to the generation of persons who were preparing to cross the Jordan into the Promised Land of Canaan. Moses said, "At that time I said to you, 'I am unable by myself to bear you. The LORD your God has multiplied you, so that today you are as numerous as the stars of heaven. May the LORD, the God of your ancestors increase you a thousand times more and bless you as He has promised you. But how can I bear the heavy burden of your disputes all by myself. Choose for each of your tribes individuals who are wise, discerning and reputable to be your leaders.' "[10] This text offers further support in defense of the rationale for leaders in the community other than the ordained and appointed individuals.

In addition to the suggestion of a development of a layer of leaders from the community, Jethro inferred a course of leadership that should be undertaken by these persons. Moses would need to teach the leaders the statues and the laws of God, instruct

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[9] Ibid., 412.

[10] Deuteronomy 1: 9-13

them on the attributes of community and provide wisdom on ethical behavior. The plan of Jethro is also replete with an inventory of qualifications for those who aspire to be chosen as leaders. These persons should possess a fear and reverential awe of God; be capable of learning and executing the will of God and be persons of trustworthiness who hate dishonest gain. [11]

This text in the Hebrew Bible offers validation to the need for lay persons in the context of the urban church, albeit lay leaders who have been trained on how to mediate the vision of God through the various ministry projects that will serve to imbue the community with transformation and empowerment. As demonstrated, the principal original intermediaries of God must be joined, for practical reasons, by those who can extend the work of God to the people. The success of this type of leadership arrangement is contingent upon the training that the leaders receive. Perhaps the most convincing proof of the need for leaders who have been trained to develop and implement work that fits the needs and concerns of the community can be found in the enumeration of divine acquiescence to Jethro's plan. "And God so commands." [12] Jethro authenticates his advice as a divine command from God to Moses.

Where the sacred document of Exodus clarifies the need for trained lay leadership in the soon-to-be visible nation of Israel, the New Testament pericope as enunciated in the Pauline epistle of 1 Corinthians, chapter twelve, verses four and forward, provides an etiology and rationale for lay leadership in the church by announcing a partial litany of gifts that are to be employed for the common good. The common good is a theme that evinces the notions that the gifts should be used for the uplift, empowerment and

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[11] Exodus 18:23 (b)

[12] Ibid.

transformation of the gathered community which will prove advantageous and helpful to the people of God as they endeavor to do kingdom work.

An outline of 1 Corinthians 12, verses four through eleven might appear as follows:

1 Corinthians 12: 4-6	Paul's transitional statement that shows him changing to the theme of spiritual gifts or the charisma;
1 Corinthians 12: 7	The etiology of gifts in the church;
1 Corinthians 12:8-10	The litany of the various gifts;
1 Corinthians 12: 11	The ministry of the Holy Spirit in the control of the gifts and the dispensation of the gifts in the church.

An exegetical analysis of this New Testament scripture will be primarily concerned with seeking clarification and understanding of the Greek term 'pros to sympheron', for the common good, as dictated in verse seven. It is the Pauline understanding that the charisma in the community of faith is not given for selfish or individual gratification, but for the edification of the whole of the community.

The genre of a homily is utilized in this text to outline the discussion surrounding spiritual gifts and their employment in the church. As Paul presents the contrast that exists between those who are pagans/unbelievers and the believers in Corinth, he emphasizes the value of recognizing and appreciating the riches and abundance that are represented in the bestowal of grace gifts (charismata) by the Holy Spirit to the community.

Paul is distressed that the congregation of believers which he had founded nearly eighteen months ago is now rent with schisms. Their tendency towards divisiveness has been fueled by the way the Corinthians have perceived the workings of the Holy Spirit among them. The issue is not diversity; rather the challenge lies in what the Corinthians have made of their diversity. Thus, Paul sets out to explicate and distinguish proper diversity and by way of a doctrinal discussion on the gifts of the Holy Spirit, he expressly states that the charismata are given for the common good.[13]

The essence of community remains a prominent motif in Paul's discourse. Out of this understanding that the New Testament church is empowered to fully witness the reconstituted people of Israel, it becomes evident that all things which are helpful to the community should be reinforced and practiced. The 'common good', or more generally, 'what is helpful', can be seen as Paul's interpretation of a Corinthian maxim, "All things are permissible." The believers understood Christianity as a way of life that permitted a spirit of freedom in Christ that could be pursued in an individualistic manner. However, the crux of Paul's argument in this text proposes that the freedom of the believers is a hallmark of Christianity. There is a higher moral calling that supports the precept that believers must also consider whether the projected action is indeed helpful to others. Thus, it is against this background that Paul boldly elucidates the sound principle that the reason for the charismata is to help or serve the community. It is incumbent upon all to realize that the exercise of leadership must be done in conformity with the standards for the common good.

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[13] Leander Keck, *The Interpreter's Bible Commentary Volume X* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2002), 773.

As the exegete for this periscope and as the researcher of a model of ministry that fosters the development of an empowered lay ministry, this Pastor finds that the community of believers in Antioch is similarly situated as that of Corinth during the time of Paul. The church in Corinth is comprised of a body of believers who exhibit tremendous diversity in social standings, economic status, religiosity, spirituality and professions. These statements can be used to provide a working identity for Antioch Baptist Christian Church. Despite the small population of persons, diversity as represented in economics, professions, spirituality, church life and personal lifestyles, is quite obvious in Antioch.

Antioch Baptist Christian Church, with her geographical location in an urban context, finds herself in the same vein as that of the church of Corinth in her location in an ancient city that is approximately forty miles from Athens.[14] Even more prescient in the recitation of the similarities between the church in Corinth and Antioch is the understanding that both of these communities are temporally situated in the formative stages of their existence. When these elements of similarities are juxtaposed, it becomes readily apparent that the existence of both of these communities fits the terminology of that of emerging churches.

The nascent nature of Antioch places her in the quasi-similar state not unlike that of the Corinthian church. Where the ethos of partisan strife placed the Corinthian church on a course of dis-unity, it also became one of the factors that could have easily contributed to the failure of the church to address the concerns of the people. For Paul, the Christian faith is one that is best expressed and practiced in community. The

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[14] Ibid.

individual is never simply and singly related to God. Faith is the by-word that enunciates the believers' right relation with God; and love, the proper care for each other, is the term that sufficiently expresses right relations to others.

An interesting notation about Paul's understanding of leadership is presented in a book written by Wayne Meeks. Dr. Meeks surmises that the early church during the time of Paul was a local household assembly. As such, a high level of commitment was demanded from all who were involved. The sociological dynamics of the local household assembly required leadership that was fluid and charismatic, though not exclusively.[15] This type of leadership implies a paradigm of shared leadership within the local household assembly. This particular type of leadership lent itself to the spirit and practice of koinonia, a communal character of leadership formation, within the early church. Evidence of Pauline concern with the communal in leadership can be found in the way in which he (Paul) trained young Timothy to assume a position of leadership.

Theological Foundation

The supporting principle that is involved in a discussion of the theological foundation for the researcher's model of ministry finds its impetus in the fact that there is a basic theological perspective for pursuing this project. With that thought in mind, this pastor will anchor her discourse in the theological statement which Jethro articulated to Moses in the twenty-third verse of the eighteenth chapter of Exodus. A theological paraphrasing of this text would resemble the following: "Moses, *God* requires that you

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[15] Wayne Meeks, *The First Urban Christians: The Social World of the Apostle Paul* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983), 190.

find a way to insure that the needs of the people are met and that you yourself will survive to lead the people of God." This paraphrase places the emphasis on God – Elohim in Hebrew and Theo in Greek. Any attempt by the leaders to mediate God to the people of God must be acceptable to God and it must be grounded in God. This is a succinct and precise definition of theology for this document.

One of the more notable things about Antioch Baptist Christian Church rests in the fact that it is a community that is composed of persons whose very beings are lived at the vortex of their struggle for meaning and liberation in America. [16] Therefore any model of ministry which is developed for implementation in Antioch must encompass the essence of the identity of the community as a people who are continually seeking the meaning of liberation. It must fully engage the dynamics of the celebration of empowerment in a people whose lives often display signs of dis-empowerment.

The model of ministry as proposed and developed by the researcher elucidates and embraces the lived-out experiences of the faith community in the urban setting. This type of experiential theological construct coincides with what has been denominated as sapiental wisdom in the Bible. A model of ministry that seeks to furnish the requisite tools and skill sets that would enable lay leaders to provide ministry in ways that would engender transformation, liberation and empowerment among the community is deeply imbedded in the tenets of liberation theology. Therefore, a discussion of the rubrics of liberation theology as postulated from the dialectics of transformation and empowerment

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[16] Samuel D. Proctor, "The Theological Validation of Black Worship", in *The Black Worship Experience,* ed.Melva Wilson Costen and Darius Leander Swann, 215, Black Church Worship Series, Vol. IV (Atlanta: The ITC Press, 1992), 225.

as identified and practiced in the ethos of the urban church in the autonomous Baptist tradition will be presented.

Liberation theology proceeds from the understanding that salvation as defined by the terms of deliverance from oppression is the beginning and not the culmination of the discourse regarding the aspects of freedom among humankind. The theologians who practice and propound the liberation motif have developed an analysis of theology that emphasizes the notion that salvation must be expansive enough to include deliverance and emancipation.[17] According to the theologians who adhere to the practice of liberation, the ministry of salvation involves a historical interaction between God and oppressed people. Therefore the ministry of salvation must be deliberate in seeking to provide release from all systems of oppression that exist in the liturgical setting. Whenever the community of faith is invested with opportunities that address their needs and concerns that allow for participation in the full worship life of the church, these persons will experience a dynamic divine-human involvement. It is to this set of objectives that this model of ministry reaches.

Another primary concern of liberation theologians revolves around the principles of humanization and de-humanization. Any and all kinds of oppressions can be viewed as inherently de-humanizing, resulting in the suppression of human dignity and value. It is a sad dilemma when the very institution, the church, that speaks the language of freedom and humanity, can become a party to oppression. This researcher clearly sees that inadequately trained and ineffective lay leadership in the urban church setting can be directly linked with feelings of denial of personhood among the congregants.

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[17] Owen C. Thomas and Ellen K. Wondra *Introduction to Theology* (Harrisburg: Morehouse Publishing, 2002).

Furthermore, it can be rationalized that the practice of the worship of false gods will begin to manifest whenever persons feel de-humanized. The worship of idol gods is often depicted in the ways that churches begin to place a higher value on things and systems than on humans than on God. Prosperity, power, control, authoritarianism, status and privilege become the idols of worship in this setting, rather than God who is revealed as the God who comes to set at liberty all those who are enslaved, marginalized and otherwise oppressed. The exodus from Egypt, the ministry of liberation as announced and practiced by Jesus, His death and resurrection all warrant prominent positions in liberation theology.

The agenda of liberation theologians revolves around the tenets of empowerment and transformation. Persons and systems are pushed to embrace the dynamics of transformation; and the marginalized are empowered in ways that would cause them to participate in bringing into fruition their own liberation. It would be fitting to state that liberation theology desires to bring about wholeness and justice for all persons, as well as the coming into full humanity for all who have been oppressed and subjugated. [18]

This researcher relied upon the themes that continue to resonate in liberation theology in formulating a model of ministry. This was done because the researcher recognizes the value of having a community of persons whose whole beings have experienced transformation in ways that bring about empowerment which will ultimately result in their own liberation. The vision of Antioch is one of Jubilee – freedom and liberation. The mission of Antioch is concerned with the discipline of working to set the

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[18] Ibid.

captives free. Therefore, the lay ministries of Antioch must engage in activities which are in consonant with the vision and mission of Antioch.

It might seem incongruous for the researcher/activist of this model of ministry to employ liberation theology as a foundation for her project in view of the fact that there is the requirement that the model be one that can be replicated in other faith communities. However, the sheer truth that liberation theology concerns itself with freedom as announced and practiced by Jesus Christ supplies the necessary impetus for the researcher to retrieve those aspects of liberation that would encourage Antioch and other faith communities to pursue God's vision of the kingdom.

The positing of liberation theology offers an opportunity for viewing the interconnectedness of the Biblical story with theological discourse. It can be easily surmised that the motif of salvation in the Biblical record is intimately linked with the liberation motif in the lived experiences of the people of God.

Historical Foundation

A study of history reveals the ways in which persons in diverse faith traditions have tried to resolve issues that are pertinent to their understanding about God, the Word of God and how these intersect in their lives. True history is not a recitation of disjointed dates, events and facts in certain epochs of time. Rather history exists in a dialectical format, that is, there is a continuum of the past to the present to the future. It is through the lens of history that persons are afforded the opportunities of engaging the past in its

context of particularity in an effort to discern present realities and the impact that this will have on future possibilities. [19]

A basic principle among churches of the Protestant tradition is that all members are, to a great degree, ministers who are empowered to live out the literal meaning of the word 'servant'. There are two distinct types of ministry – the ordained ministry and the lay ministry. However, all are engaged in serving Christ and in ministering to the community of faith. The ordained ministry includes many categories of persons who have been especially set apart to serve the church in distinctive ways. Pastors, chaplains, missionaries, seminary professors, regional and area ministers, editors of religious publications, deacons and certain types of denominational officers can be named in this category. Although this list of ordained offices is not exhaustive, it is meant to provide some definitional differentiation between ordained and lay persons.

The lay ministry, or laity, is concerned with roles or functions within the local or general church, which are carried out by persons who are not necessarily ordained.[20] Included in this definition of lay minister is the nucleus of the concept of the ministry of leadership in which persons from the general body of believers are trained for their responsibilities as leaders. Gifts of leadership and leaders who exercise these gifts are needed in the congregation in order to enable the whole church to develop spiritual maturity so that it (the church) is prepared to fulfill the calling it has received from God to be the instrument through which God will mediate the kingdom of God. According to

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[19] Maxine Waddell, *Historical Foundations* (Atlanta, 2004), 1.

[20] Norman Maring and Winthrop Hudson, *A Baptist Manual of Polity and Practice* (Valley Forge: Judson Press, 1991), 97-98.

Paul, Christ bestowed gifts to the church and these gifts were rendered to the church for the specific purposes of equipping the saints for the work of ministry and for building up the body of Christ.[21] With this understanding relative to the distinctions that exist between the ordained ministry and the lay ministry, the researcher will proceed with a discussion of the historical foundation upon which the model of ministry is predicated.

The historical discourse will be dealt with from a microcosmic dimension that will introduce definition in the context and the issues that pertain to a specific historical era. From a historical perspective, the issue that is under examination entails an assessment of the roles in which lay leaders from past eras have functioned in order to uplift and enrich the community of faith. The objective of the discussion surrounding the historical foundation is to explain some of the responses of lay leaders, as these leaders have attempted to participate in engendering a sense of authentic koinonia among the congregants. If these explanations are to be of any merit, it naturally follows that the discussions that follow will contain discrete statements that articulate the context with specificity and particularity.

The context that the researcher used in the development of her model of ministry is one that includes a congregation of believers whose desire is to embrace its pursuit of creating, maintaining and fostering the growth of koinonia or community. Lay leaders should become servants/ministers/agents in pursuing this objective within the community of faith through the planning, development and implementation of ministry projects and activities that further this purpose. Thus, it is with these factors in mind that the researcher will offer a response to the question relative to how lay leaders from the past have served in assisting the community of faith to interpret God's actions in their lives.

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[21] Ephesians 4:12

From a deliberate analysis of the roles and functions of lay leaders from a historical perspective, the researcher deduced that lay leaders employed their gifts and skills to foster the well-being of the community in several ways. Three of these areas will be discussed: the area of providing guidance to the church; the area of education and the area of human rights.

In his seminal treatise entitled *Effective Small Churches in the Twenty-First Century,* Carl S. Dudley raises the point that in the past denominational resources have been utilized to train and enrich the lay leadership of some congregations. [22] The context in which lay leaders were used to provide guidance to churches involved situations where there was a dearth of ordained clergy who were available to assume the role of pastor to local assemblies. The needs of the communities in this instance involved that of having a lay person serve as the shepherd of the local body. It was from this context that the congregation would set aside one of their members to lead them. This model of 'lay pastors' has centuries of history. The principle of lay leaders in the position of shepherd of local churches is still maintained in several denominations, the Mennonites and Friends. It is currently experiencing a renaissance among small newly established Christian churches as well.[23]

There have also arisen occasions when lay leaders have been trained and empowered to administer the ordinance of baptism. Where the presence of ordained clergy to perform the sacred rite of baptism was non-existent, congregations are enabled

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[22] Carl S. Dudley, *Effective Small Churches in the Twenty-First Century* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1978), 176.

[23] Ibid., 184.

to direct that a lay leader be allowed to dispense this ordinance. Under the circumstances and according to the tenets of the New Testament church, baptism that is performed by lay persons is entirely valid and sufficient. The validity of the baptism depended, not on the administrator, but rather on the character and profession of the candidate. The churches did not need to deprive themselves of the engagement of the ordinance because an ordained minister was not obtainable. [24]

Of course, it can readily be seen that the experience of lay leaders serving as shepherds of local churches and officiating as administrators of the rite of baptism, is confined to the needs and concerns of the congregation. These congregational needs were quite obvious and context specific. It is this principle of community that has been posited by the researcher as a rationale of primacy as to why lay leaders need to be involved in a formal system of training that is predicated on the vision, the mission and the people in the local assembly. A basic dictum of the twenty-first century church should resonate with the idea that lay leaders must be trained, enabled and empowered to minister to the people of God according to the context, the vision and the mission of the local congregation. In that way, these persons would be serving the greater good and contributing to koinonia within the assembly.

When the tenets of Christianity began to provide legitimation for the abolition of the system of slavery in the United States, there arose opportunities for lay persons to move to the forefront in the anti-slavery movement. This is an all-together curious dimension to the understanding that is being posited by this researcher – that lay leaders should be trained to respond to the exigencies of the church and society at large. The

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[24] Edward T. Hiscox, *Principles and Practices for Baptist Churches* (Grand Rapids: Kruegel Publications, 1987), 129.

matter of the abolition of slavery was not simply an issue of the larger society, but it was one that the church confronted as well.

Throughout most of the nineteenth century the abolitionist movement became the mechanism by which religious people, of all races and faith traditions, could put their faith into action. There were many Black women participants who answered the call through the focus of ministry, albeit lay and not ordained ministry, during this precipitous time in the life of the church.

Maria W. Stewart, a member of Boston's African Baptist Church became a strong advocate for women's rights as she delivered public political speeches and as she served as a Black political writer. Harriet Tubman, a staunch member of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church tradition, used familiar Black spirituals as codes for escape-oriented communications to the slaves. Isabella Baumfree, also known as Sojourner Truth, maintained association in the New York A. M. E. Zion Church. She became an eloquent orator in defense of the abolitionist movement. Sojourner Truth likened her exploits as being akin to the secular counterpart of spiritual salvation. [25]

These women were disqualified from becoming members of the ordained clergy, due to the overt practice of patriarchialism and the misguided notions of the church that God had mandated that the pulpit should be and remain the exclusive domain for males. Yet, despite these obstacles, women took on the tasks of developing ways to address and confront the issues of that era. Suffice it so say that, one cannot point to any formalized methodology which the church organized in order to train these lay women for their

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[25] C. Eric Lincoln and Lawrence H. Mamiya, *The Black Church in the African American Experience,* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1990), 281-282.

roles. But this does not mean that training in leadership was lacking in their professions. It was simply not engendered under the auspices of the church.

The post-slavery and civil rights eras became a time when the church laity introduced other more radical ways to express and demonstrate leadership that would be impactive in addressing the concerns of church folks during that time. The discipline of education has always occupied a place of profound significance within the ranks of the church, especially the Black church. An overwhelming number of religiously minded Black women felt that they had been called to teach. The educational needs of the Black community were so great, especially after the civil war when thousands of former slaves crammed the churches which often doubled as schoolhouses that the vocation of teaching became an attraction for Black women.

The annals of history stand as testimony to the outstanding educational ministry that Frances Jackson Coppin, Dr. Anna Julia Cooper, Dr. Mary McCleod Bethune and Nannie Burroughs practiced during the latter part of the nineteenth century and the early years of the twentieth century.[26] It does not take any great stretch of the mind or imagination to reason that these women who felt the call to engage in the ministry of teaching underwent rigorous training in order to fulfill their responsibilities as lay persons in the educational field. Even more decidedly, it can be reasoned that their most credible and noteworthy training did not emanate from the church setting, but rather from the public sector.

If any lesson can be deduced from what these lay women did, it would resound with the profundity that the church can no longer afford to overlook these persons who

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[26] Ibid., 283.

is here that one finds that the Hellenist (Greek) widows in the early church had begun to complain that their needs were not being met. The response of the twelve was immediate. Lay leaders were chosen and empowered to hear the concerns of the people and to address their concerns in appropriate ways.

The congregation of Antioch is comprised of persons whose lives are replete with great diversity. From the preschoolers to wisdom-bearing elders, the dimension of interests among the believers runs the gamut. Therefore, this pastor resolutely affirms that lay leadership should be trained and empowered to deliver ministry responses in which the Good News of Jesus Christ-liberation, transformation and empowerment-is announced to the people of God in ways that would serve to create and maintain authentic community.

chose far more sublimated paths to ministering to the needs of their people by participating in more secular activities such as abolitionism, women's rights and the anti-lynching campaign. Many of these community service and political activities stemmed from a moral and spiritual concern to uplift the human race that was deeply rooted in religious motivation. The fact that all of these persons maintained loyal and faithful membership in the church, but were excluded from the ranks of clergy should be kept uppermost in the minds and hearts.

Summary

There remains a high proportion of persons in the faith community in the urban setting whose lives have failed to evidence liberation and the practice of transformative vocation. This has had the impact of bringing about a large number of un-churched persons and the silencing of many of the voices of the people. When people experience silencing, this can ultimately result in the silencing of the witness of the church about Jesus to the world. This would surely be an injustice to those persons whose existences are being lived in the uttermost parts of the world.

The researcher/pastor firmly believes that one of the more appropriate responses to this dilemma might be found in the promulgation of a systematic program for lay leaders that would offer training on how to plan, develop and implement ministry programs that would further the sacred principle of koinonia among the congregants.

The paradigm for this type of empowered ministry from the lay leaders to the people of God can be viewed in the events as presented in the sixteenth chapter of Acts. It

CHAPTER FOUR

METHODOLOGY

The researcher, in chapter four, will undertake the task of delineating and offering a critical discussion of the methodology and the project design that she employed in formulating the designated model of ministry. As was previously stipulated, the model of ministry that was developed for the project, *On Common Ground: A Communal Paradigm of Lay Leadership,* is based on the discipline and precepts of Christian education. Thus the model of ministry will be encapsulated in and presented through the rigors of a pedagogical discipline that strives to promote and favor the achievement of virtues that might result in the creation and maintenance of koinonia, or community.

The research model that was created in an attempt to meet the objectives of the writer's project will be analyzed around the following outline: a statement of the hypothesis that is consonant with the researcher's synergy; a delineation of the intervention that was used by the researcher in responding to the hypothesis; a description of the research design; the tools of measurements that were employed to test the hypothesis and an apt definition of the instrumentation. Additionally, the parameters of chapter four will include a discourse on the project time line, which will detail the schedule for the implementation of the methodology.

The issue of lay leadership can be further amplified through the positing of the hypothesis that was adopted for the project. The fundamental queries that elucidate the hypothetical parameters of the project can be articulated as follows:

Query 1: *If the full body of believers has been given the mandate to become a holy priesthood who are empowered to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ in the community of faith,*[1] *why are a disproportionate number of persons failing in this endeavor?*

Query 2: *If the church has been called to practice and mediate koinonia in her midst, why is there a seeming predisposition towards factionalism or dis-unity among the gathered body of believers?*

Query 3: *If Jesus founded the church on the principle that the New Testament church would become the re-constituted community of the people of God, why is there such a dearth of the spirit and community in the church?*

Query 4: *How can the people of God begin to truly experience authentic transformation, liberation and empowerment in an urban context in ways that witness God in their lives and to the larger world?*

Query 5: *Why are the attendance and participation of the laity in lay ministry programs so low in proportion to the persons who claim membership in the local church?*

Query 6: *Why are a disproportionate number of the activities presented by the various lay ministries seemingly devoid of any nuances of effecting transformation, liberation and empowerment in the lives of those who do attend and participate?*

With a presentation of the above-cited queries, the hypothesis can be stated as follows: if lay leaders are exposed to and involved in a deliberate regimen of training that

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[1] 1 Peter 2:5

emphasizes koinonia, then they would be more prone to offer ministry endeavors to the church that would be intentional in promoting community. This would lend itself to the promulgation of liberation, empowerment and liberation among the congregants. The project, *For the Common Good: A Communal Paradigm of Lay Leadership,* was designed to introduce a developmental training program for lay leaders that would teach them how to plan, develop and implement ministry programs and activities that seek to address the divine, ecclesial and community concerns in their focus.

Newly established communities of faith are faced with the challenge of hitting the ground running in the delivery of sound ministry to the people of God. Yet, frequently, the only persons who are prepared to engage in authentic ministry that emphasizes the prophetic witness of God and will engender transformation among the people, are those of the clergy. Thus, it becomes vitally important for young churches to have a program in place that would allow them to identify and train lay persons on how to plan and deliver ministry activities that are fully representative of the vision, mission and the voices of the community.

The wisdom that under girds this project proceeds from the premise that if lay leaders are trained on how to formulate ministry activities that have the aims of glorifying God and edifying the people of God, then the members of the community will be more enthusiastic about participating in the lay ministries of the church. Two goals of the project will be to insure increased community attendance and to encourage more meaningful participation in the various lay ministry endeavors. With these foci in mind, the researcher/pastor offers the prognostication that the virtues of liberation,

transformation and empowerment will be more possibly achieved among the people of God.

The research for the postulation of a response to the proposed hypothesis employed a qualitative approach and analysis, albeit a non-traditional concept of the qualitative approach. The non-traditional qualitative approach maintains an insistence on posing the question of, "How do I (we) improve my (our) work?"[2] rather than from the traditional posture of , "What is happening?". The qualitative approach operates in an almost polar opposite manner from the quantitative. It is in the qualitative mode that the researcher is permitted to interact and involve herself in the study. This interaction on the part of the researcher/pastor may take the form of living with or observing the participants over a protracted period of time or actual collaboration with the participants. [3]

The researcher of this project was dynamically and intimately involved with the project and the participants. It would seem almost impossible for her not to have a more hands-on approach, especially in view of the fact that to be called into ministry for God is a call to embrace and touch the people of God in the most intimate areas of their lives. Thus the research design for this study was based on the premises of action research methodology.

The overall title of the model of ministry is *For the Common Good: A Communal Paradigm of Lay Leadership.* However, the researcher envisioned a very specific theme for the research design/project that she implemented in order to complete the model of

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[2] Jean McNiff, *You and Your Action Research Project* (New York: Routledge-Farmer, 2003), 10.

[3] John W. Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative & Quantitative Approaches* (London: Sage Publishers, 1994), 35.

ministry. The title of the research design/project is *Lift Every Voice.* This title signifies the researcher's determination to present the diversity of voices that should be included in lay ministry programs – God's voice as enunciated in the vision of the church, the institutional voice as given through the mission statement and the voice of the whole community of believers as demonstrated in their lives and experiences.

The research design/project involved three (3) phases of implementation that occurred over twelve weeks. The twelve week implementation stage was preceded by six (6) months of data collection in the preliminary stage. Therefore the time line for the research design/project can be configured in the following manner:

1. Preliminary stage – six months in duration
2. Implementation stage
    a. Preparatory phase – four weeks in duration
    b. Performance phase – six weeks in duration
    c. Evaluation phase – two weeks in duration.

During the six months of the preliminary stage, the researcher utilized a triangulation approach in order to collect the requisite data for the project. This triangulation approach included: 1) direct observation of the eighteen lay ministries from her previous context of ministry; 2) the administration of a Congregational Involvement Inventory[4] to a group of thirty laity; and 3) a group interview with the same group of individuals.

The four week preparatory phase of the project, *Lift Every Voice,* commenced after the researcher completed the six months of data collection in the preliminary stage.

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[4] Appendix A.

The preparatory activities were those actions that needed to be engaged in prior to engagement in the performance phase of the project. These actions included the delivery and administration of the Wagner-Modified Houts Questionnaire Gifts Inventory [5] and the administration of the the PACE Profile [6] to the prospective lay persons at Antioch Baptist Christian Church.

Upon the completion of the Wagner-Modified Houts Questionnaire Gifts Inventory, each participant was invited to undergo a personal consultation with the researcher. During the consultation, the individuals were afforded the opportunity of engaging in a discussion relative to their particular area of giftedness and the gifts that complemented this area of ministry. This time of discourse was infused with prayers seeking God's intervention in order to clearly discern the identity of the lay leaders in the community of Antioch. This process enabled the researcher to identify twelve prospective lay leaders in Antioch.

The performance phase was comprised of activities and events in which participants engaged during the formal heart-and-soul phase of the project. Prior to the commencement of this phase, a Lay Leader Pre-Test[7] was administered to the prospective lay leaders. Subsequent to the administration of the Lay Leader Pre-Test, the twelve prospective lay leaders in Antioch were immersed in a six week comprehensive training program that had been developed using the discipline of Christian education. The researcher served as the facilitator in the teaching of a curriculum that contained six

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[5] C. Peter Wagner, *Your Spiritual Gifts Can Help Your Church Grow* (Pasadena: Gospel Light), 97-117.

[6] George Parsons, *PACE Profile* (Eugene, OR., 1972).

[7] Appendix A.

modules. The weekly didactic sessions on the mission, vision and community were combined with the delivery of a sermon by the researcher/preacher on the issue of community creation and maintenance on the following Sunday.

The final modules that were taught in the Performance Phase related concerned how to plan ministry projects that matter. A step-by-step approach was presented to the participants. Subsequent to the didactic portion, the lay leaders were then asked to apply what they had learned by actually planning a ministry project that would be implemented in Antioch.

At the end of the performance phase of the project, the lay leaders participated in the third phase, the evaluative phase. Both qualitative assessments and practical evaluation tools were used to gauge the progress of the lay leaders. A Lay Leader Post-test[8] that conformed to the conditions of the Pre-test[9] was administered to the participants.

The lay leaders were encouraged to develop a ministry program[10] using the guidelines learned during the training sessions. The ministry program which the lay leaders formulated was put to the test by the general membership in an effort to determine whether it met the standards of efficacy that had been previously established. An exercise in orthopraxy was deemed indispensable to the author's research design/project, in view of the fact that the participants had been subjected to the

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[8] Appendix A.

[9] Ibid.

[10] Ibid.

dissemination of orthodoxy or educational information during the earlier phases of the project.

Summary

The results of the ministry project should provide a response to the hypothetical question of whether a systematized training program for lay leaders that emphasizes the dynamics of community will aid lay ministries in the planning, development and implementation of ministry endeavors that will promote and insure authentic koinonia. From an impact perspective, it is hoped that the lay leaders will gain a better understanding of themselves and the community of God's people. They will develop an attitudinal change about the practice and dimensions of lay ministry in which they serve. The involvement and participation level of the members of the church will increase. Thus the community will be provided with another venue for witnessing the Good News of Jesus Christ that will enable the believers to experience spiritual growth, transformation, liberation and empowerment.

CHAPTER FIVE

FIELD EXPERIENCE

The formal stage of the ministry project was separated into three distinct phases: 1) the preparatory phase; 2) the performance phase; and 3) the evaluative phase. The time needed to accomplish each stage was four weeks, six weeks and two weeks, respectively, for a total of twelve weeks for the completion of the formal stage of the ministry project.

However, it became necessary for the researcher to engage in the data collection process before she could commence work on the three phases of the formal stage of the project. The time that was necessary to complete the data collection process entailed six months. Therefore, the information that will be presented in Chapter Five on the Field Experience will take into consideration the six months of preliminary data collection and the twelve weeks of the three-phase formal stage of the project.

The Preliminary Stage

While employed in the position of minister of Christian education at Mt. Pleasant Baptist Church, the researcher was able to involve herself with the various lay ministries at said church. It was during her tenure in this capacity that she observed a seeming lack of participation in the various activities of the lay ministries by the local congregation. This led her to question why so few persons attended these lay endeavors and even more

poignantly why it appeared that those few who did attend seemed to experience little or no transformation in their lives.

From September 2003 to February 2004, the researcher began an exploration of this dilemma by initiating an investigation of the lay ministry and congregational dynamics at Mt. Pleasant Baptist Church. The triangulation system of investigation that she used during this period of time included three social research tools: direct observation, a Congregational Involvement Survey and group/personal interviews. This is what has been denominated as the multiple-method approach that would more possibly result in clarification or the collection of more correct data.

Direct Observation

The protocol that was established for direct observation allowed the researcher as the minister of Christian education to attend the various planning meeting that were being convened by the five departments of lay ministry at Mt. Pleasant Baptist Church: 1) the Family Life Ministry which consisted of the Men's Ministry, the Women's Ministry, the Children's Ministry, the Singles' Ministry and the Married Couples' Ministry; 2) the Liturgical Department which was comprised of the Music Ministry, the Male Ushers, the Usherettes, the Children's Ushers and the Hospitality Department; 3) the Christian education department was composed of Sunday school, Tuesday night Bible study, Thursday night Sunday school teachers' review, New Members' Orientation and Candidates for Baptism classes; and 4) the Administrative and Governance Board which included the Board of Trustees, the Deacons, the Mothers' Board, the Budget Committee and the Public Relations Ministry.

This researcher had an automatic entrée to attend the planning sessions for each of the above-named ministries given the fact that these ministries, theoretically, fell under her purview as the minister of Christian education. However, she specifically sought permission and consent from the respective lay leaders of each ministry in order to attend their planning sessions. Upon her entry into the meetings, she chose not to have any vocal input. She became an observer whose intent was to investigate and offer a narrative description of what transpired in the meetings.

There were some common issues that arose in nearly all of the planning sessions that the lay ministries convened. Leaders failed to report to the sessions prepared to engage in the process of formulating projects or activities that the particular ministry could offer to the congregation. All too often, the leaders who were present deferred to the suggestions that would come directly from the Pastor of the church. Therefore, there was no independent process of critical thinking that was employed by the lay leaders. In many instances, the lead person of the ministry chose to relinquish the chairing of the meeting session to the Pastor who was present at every session. Although the Pastor, by virtue of the office, is vested with the position of ex officio member of every organization in the church, Pastoral presence and leadership of said meetings can often serve to create a *chilling* effect among the attendees. That is, out of respect for the office of Pastor (fear?), many persons will chose to remain silent when the shepherd of the church is represented among the attendees at a meeting.

The demographics of the strata of lay leadership in Mt. Pleasant Baptist Church did not lean towards diversity. Eighty percent (51) of the lay leaders of the various ministries were male over the age of sixty, and who maintained an entrenched perspective

of traditionalism when it came to doing ministry in the church. Perhaps anecdotal evidence can best explain traditionalism, "This is how it's always been done." This set of dynamics was in evidence, despite the fact that over seventy percent of the congregation was female and nearly three-quarters of the members were under the age of fifty.

The lay leaders adhered to the ideology that only persons within the ranks of the ordained clergy were allowed to initiate and practice ministry in the congregation. The only reason for the existence of lay leaders was to provide support for what the Pastor or other members of the ordained ministry suggested. Furthermore, the fact that the gatherings of Trustees, Deacons and Mothers of the church were still being referred to as 'boards' or 'departments' is another indicator that the various lay ministries might not have taken the charge to involve themselves in transformative ministry to the people as a serious undertaking. The grumblings of some of the congregants seemed to further solidify this belief. "If you want to get anything done around here, you need to go to the Pastor first. If the Pastor approves of your idea and if the Pastor is allowed to claim the idea as being an original with the Pastor, then the Pastor will instruct the lay ministry on how to get the thing done," remarked one of the congregants.

The discipline of direct observation was not limited to that which was seen, but it also applied to that which was heard by the researcher. Whenever a lay ministry determined to announce a ministry event to the general congregation, the leaders would acquiesce to the pastor and request the pastor to verbalize the announcement with the understanding that this was an event that had been authorized and approved by the pastor. The only instance in which this procedure was not followed occurred when the Music Ministry issued announcements concerning the upcoming musical concerts. In this case,

the leader of the Music Ministry would directly vocalize the announcement to the general congregation.

Congregational Involvement Survey

Although the researcher gleaned a select amount of quality data from the tool of Direct Observation at the planning sessions of the lay ministries, another method of data collection was needed in order to further confirm and support her hypothesis. The researcher compiled a Congregational Involvement Survey which she administered to a select group of thirty members of Mt. Pleasant Baptist Church. This group of respondents served as a Focus Group that was comprised of members of the laity who would most likely receive the benefit from any programs that would have been undertaken by the lay leaders and their ministries. Prior to the administration of the Congregational Involvement Survey, each of the participants was asked to sign an Informed Consent Form that would allow the researcher to process and document the results in the doctoral program at United Theological Seminary. [1] The researcher met with the Focus Group of thirty laity and explained her project and the rationale behind the survey.

The demographics indicia for participation in the survey included an array of factors which were reflected in the queries on the survey. *Question 1: What is your age?* One-fifth, or six persons, were chosen to represent each of the age groups shown on the survey: ages 21-34; ages 35-45; ages 46-55; ages 56-64 and over 65 years of age. *Question 2*: *What is your gender?* The gender ratio of participants was two-thirds female (twenty persons) and one-third male (ten persons). *Question 3: What is your marital status?* Eight of the respondents were single, having never been married; twelve had

[1] Appendix A.

experienced separation or divorce; three were in a state of widowhood and seven were married. *Question 4: What are the number and ages of your children?* None of the respondents had children under the age of four years. Thirteen reported having children between the ages of five and twelve years. Eight responded that they had children between the ages of thirteen and seventeen. The remaining nine individuals indicated that they did not have any children.

The responses to *Question 5* provided the data that out of the thirty (30) respondents to the Congregational Involvement Survey, two (2) persons had a tenure of one year or less in membership at Mt. Pleasant Baptist Church; fourteen (14) persons had been in membership with the church two to five years; five (5) claimed a tenure of six to tens years; with seven (7) stating that they had been members from eleven to nineteen years and only two (2) persons had memberships for twenty years or more. Based on the variations in demographics and the diversity in the length of membership, the Focus Group of thirty (30) perhaps presented an appropriate representation of the community of believers at Mt. Pleasant Baptist Church. This group of persons epitomized the 'demographic interests and concerns' of the body of believers for whom lay ministry endeavors should have been planned.

The remaining questions on the survey, *numbers 7 through 10*, focused on the essence of congregational involvement in the lay ministry activities. According to the responses provided for *question 7*, only two (2) persons held membership in one lay ministry; while twenty-seven (27) persons chose not be a member of any lay ministry. This is a profound revelation in a church where the number and diversity of lay ministries are so plentiful. The reasoning for this low numbers of persons being involved as

members of the lay ministries will be explained during the discussion on the Interview phase.

In response to the question that asked whether their involvement through attendance and participation in the lay ministry endeavors had increased, decreased or remained the same during the past year, not one person indicated that their attendance and participation had increased. Twenty-five (25) stated that their involvement had decreased and two (2) persons responded that their involvement had remained the same. Further discussion of this data will be shown in the discourse on the Interview phase.

The final two questions asked the respondents to state why their participation and attendance had increased or decreased. Of the twenty-five (25) who stated that their involvement had decreased, the reasons were as follows: three (3) indicated the reason as having less time available; three (3) others stated that it was due to the fact that they had to care for their children; twelve (12) emphasized that their decrease in participation resulted from the fact that they had lost interest in lay ministry; and seven (7) stated that the activities that were being presented by the ministries did not have any relevance for their lives.

Since no one indicated that their level of participation in lay ministry events had increased over the past year, there were no responses to *question 10*. This researcher did not find any advantage to asking the rationale as to why the ministry participation had remained the same over the last year. The findings from the survey contained some valid and legitimate data concerning lay ministry. The researcher was able to input these findings directly into her model of ministry.

Interview

The respondents who participated in the Congregational Involvement Survey had already been apprised of the fact that they would be engaged in a personal group interview session with the researcher. Therefore, subsequent to the completion of the Congregational Involvement Survey, the group interview session was convened.

It was determined that only the following respondents would participate in the interview session: the twenty-seven persons (27) who answered *Question 7* with the response that they did not hold membership in any lay ministry and the twenty-five (25) individuals who in their response to *Question 8* indicated that their participation in the planned lay ministry events had decreased over the past year. Of course, it should be pointed out that there was a great deal of overlapping in these two categories of questions.

Due to the fact that each of these respondents had already given consent to the researcher for the use of their information in the doctoral program, the researcher was able to proceed with the interview without much fanfare or introduction. The twenty-seven persons remained with the researcher after the completion of the Survey. The interview session was recorded through using a tape recorder. However, the names of the individuals were not recorded.

The researcher initiated the interview session by asking the group to provide comment on why they had opted to remain un-involved in any of the various lay ministries at the church. Although, the responses were varied, there were some commonalities of reasoning among the respondents answers. They expressed the idea that a 'legacy syndrome' seemed exist in regards to the lay ministries at Mt. Pleasant Baptist

Church. After listening to the respondents, the researcher was able to ascertain what was meant by the term 'legacy syndrome'. Eighty percent (81) of the leaders (fifty one out of sixty four) of the various lay ministry at Mt. Pleasant had occupied the same position of leadership for a minimum of fifteen (15) years, with some persons being in leadership positions for twenty-five (25) years. The respondents saw this concept of longevity in leadership tenure as a sign that the church was concerned only with maintaining the status quo. Many of these twenty-seven (27) respondents had begun to experience tumultuous life situation–family problems, child custody situations, divorce, re-marriage, and the provision of care for elderly relatives and the onset of debilitating illnesses. This group of respondents reasoned that the longer-tenured leaders were ill-equipped to provide ministry that would be relevant to their lives.

The twenty-five (25) persons who indicated that their attendance and participation in the activities of the lay ministries had decreased over the past year (*Question 9*) presented a similar rationale for their choice of non-involvement. There were some additional concerned raised by these persons. They sensed that the church placed more emphasis on 'entertainment' of the people rather than on 'spiritual enrichment' of the people. This was evident, according to the twenty-five respondents, in the fiscal realities of MPBC. According to the budget that was presented at the annual business meeting, the Budget Committee and the other auxiliary administrative boards had proposed and supported allotting nearly $100,000.00 per year as salary payments to the persons in the Music ministry; whereas, the allotment of money for the Christian education department totaled $30,000.00. These budgetary allocations became tantamount to a determination of what the church viewed as important to these twenty-five persons. (It should be recalled

that all of the lay ministries of Mt. Pleasant, with the exception of the Music ministry, fell under the purview of Christian education).

When the researcher prodded the interviewees to relate the ministry activities which garnered the most support as measured by the standards of attendance and participation from the general congregation, more than three-quarters of them spoke about the annual musical concerts that the music ministry presented. From what they observed, the numbers of persons who committed themselves to attending bi-weekly choir rehearsals swelled from a group of thirty persons to well over one hundred persons, as they prepared to engage in the annual musical concerts. These same individuals were willing to expend hundreds of dollars on the appropriate outfits which would be worn at the concerts. Additionally, the church was willing to engage the services of extra musicians, at additional costs and salaries, for the musical concert. In the meantime, the remaining lay ministries of the church continued to do business as usual.

The remarks of the respondents indicated that the church seemed to be playing a game of favoritism among the lay ministries. The researcher came to the same conclusion that the apostle Paul came to in the book of 1 Corinthians. Divisions in the body of Christ in the forms of favoritism of any kind will not lead to a spirit of community but to schisms in the church.

The Preparatory Phase

This researcher experienced a shift in roles and responsibilities at this juncture of the ministry project. Having completed the triangulation methodology to secure the data

from the lay ministries at Mount Pleasant Baptist Church, the researcher found herself involved in a transition from the position of minister of Christian education at MPBC to Pastor of a newly established church. The Christian educator-turned-Pastor determined to employ the same triangulation approach for the data collection process in the new church setting, albeit with a few variations. The research tools that she used were the Questionnaire/Survey, Interviews and the Lay Leaders Pre-Test.

Questionnaire/Survey

As the Pastor of Antioch Baptist Church, the researcher administered the Wagner-Modified Houts Questionnaire Gifts Inventory to all of the persons who became members of Antioch during its foundational period. This gifts inventory was chosen in view of the fact that it provided an opportunity for the identification of the general gift of leadership. It also presented the summary standards of definitions for the ministries of missions, Christian education, hospitality and administration. All of these factors proved to beneficial to Antioch, where the vision for the church included the establishment of the above-named lay ministries from the outset.

The questionnaire is structured around one hundred twenty five (125) declarations related to the gifts of the Spirit. The individuals who engaged in the questionnaire were asked to mark to what extent each statement was true in their life. The marking notations were: (3) much; (2) some; (1) little and (0) not at all.

Each member of Antioch was issued the questionnaire that contained *only* the one hundred twenty five statements during the last week of July 2004. They were asked to complete the questionnaire according to the directions and return the completed forms to

the researcher no later than the second Sunday in August 2004. All persons followed the directions and the forms from the forty members of Antioch were placed in the researchers hands in a timely manner.

The researcher then took the scores from each of the forty questionnaires and entered them for each person in the grids on the chart. Based upon the definition and categories of the gifts as delineated in the Wagner-Modified Houts Questionnaire, the researcher made the preliminary assumption that twelve persons evinced the possible gift of leadership.

Interview

For the twelve persons who demonstrated a threshold gift of leadership, the researcher set about to conduct individual and personal consultations with each person. These persons were asked to sign up for the private consultations and subsequently engaged in the same. The individual sessions approximated one (1) hour in duration.

Each person received a packet during the interview sessions. Included in the packet was a letter from the pastor, a listing of lay ministries that would be in evidence at Antioch and a document that set forth the results of their questionnaire. The discussions centered on the document that contained the results of the gifts questionnaire for the individual. The results of the gifts questionnaire were organized in the following categories for discussion: strong areas of giftedness with appropriate scores; suggested areas of lay ministry responsibilities[2] in Antioch; further recommendations and comments/concerns.

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[2] Appendix C.

The participants were asked whether they would accept the responsibility and challenge of becoming a member of the leadership cadre at Antioch. Upon their acceptance of the transition into lay leadership, the individuals were then tasked with the responsibility of attending and participating in the lay leadership program, *Lift Every Voice Project.*[3] Each person who indicated approval of this regimen of training was encouraged to enter into a covenant of agreement. All twelve of the prospective lay leaders endorsed the covenant of agreement.

The *Lift Every Voice Project* became the primary Christian education research design/project/initiative that the researcher used in the development and implementation of her model of ministry that emphasized a communal paradigm of lay leadership. Concurrently with the above requirements, each participant in the leadership training program was asked to complete the PACE Profile prior to the beginning of the training regimen. A more expansive discussion of the PACE Profile will be presented in the Performance Stage of the project.

Lay Leaders Pre-Test

The leadership training project was slated to begin in January 2005. However, before any of the twelve persons who had demonstrated evidence of the gift of leadership could enter the leadership training project, each was asked to participate in a Pre-test. A copy of the Pre-test was delivered to the prospective leaders during the last week of December 2004. They were asked to complete the Pre-test and to return the same to the

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[3] Appendix B.

researcher prior to the beginning of the leadership training program set to start in January 2005.

The questions and summary results of the Pre-Test are indicated as follows:

Question A *Demographics*

A.1 Identification of the name of individual

A.2 Name of church where you served as a lay leader. Five of the twelve persons indicated that they had served as a lay leader in their previous church affiliation.

A.3 Identification of the Pastor of their previous church

A.4 What type of polity was practiced at this church? Five possible answers were provided: autonomous, hierarchical, Episcopal, other and don't know. All five answered with the 'don't know' indicator.

Question B *Experiential aspects of lay leadership*

B.1 How long did you serve as a lay leader? Two (2) had served for tenure of two (2) years; one (1) for six (6) years; one (1) for two (2) years and one (1) for one (1) year. The remaining seven (7) persons had never served as a leader in lay ministry.

B.2 What office did you hold in the lay ministry? Two (2) individuals functioned as co-chairpersons on the teams for the New Members' Department. In the Ushers' Department, one (1) person served as the

recorder/secretary. The remaining persons served as representatives on the Music Council.

Question C

Appointment/Selection to Lay Leadership. Please check all that apply to the manner in which you were chosen to serve as a lay leader. The administration and results from a gifts questionnaire did not play a part in any of the selection processes. The two (2) persons who served who served s co-chairpersons on the New Members' team were pastoral appointments. The recorder/secretary of the Ushers' Department responded with 'other', indicating that she was elected by the other ushers. The two (2) who served as representatives on the Music Council had been chosen by the minister of music, who was an ordained minister.

Question D

Church

D.1 Please state the vision of the church in which you served as a lay leader. None of the persons was able to recall the vision. However, all of them remembered the slogans of the church, "Not by might, but by my power, 'says the Lord of Hosts'"; and "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, and that makes us sisters and brothers in Christ."

D.2 What was the mission statement? In a similar vein, none of the five (5) was able to recall the mission statement of the church.

Question E *Community*

E.1 Did you participate in planning activities for the ministry in which you served as lay leader? Only the two (2) representatives to the Music Council responded in the affirmative.

E.2 If yes, did you or your ministry plan activities that were of significance to the members? (activities that related to the lives and issues of the member). The two (2) positive responders indicated that they understood that the plans that they assisted in developing for the annual musical concerts that were presented by the choirs fit these parameters of community.

Question F. *Training*

F.1 Did the church provide you with training on how to serve as a lay leader? All of the respondents (5) answered with a negative answer.

F.2 If yes, was there a written curriculum that accompanied the training? None provided an answer to this question.

F.3 Did the church provide you with training on how to plan, develop and implement ministry activities? All of the respondents answered with a negative answer.

F.4 If yes, was there a written curriculum that accompanied the training? Again, none of the respondents provided and answer to this question.

The Performance Stage

During six weeks beginning with the first week in January 2005 and commencing on the second week in February 2005, the researcher convened the leadership training project, *Lift Every Voice,* for the twelve persons who had accepted the challenge of moving into leadership as a lay person in Antioch Baptist Christian Church. It was important that the sessions be conducted and attended in a consecutive manner. This would insure an atmosphere of continuity and would also lend itself to quality appropriation of the material by the participants.

Because the facilitator agrees with the premise that every moment should become an opportunity for imparting wisdom to others, she made a conscious effort to take advantage of every opportunity to provide training to the prospective leaders. She found an opportunity to begin this process in the spatial components of the meeting area for the training session.

A physical setting that would enable a full representation of the discipline of pedagogy was chosen in which to conduct the training program. The spatial configuration of the community room at the local public library allowed the facilitator the opportunity of placing the tables and chairs in a village-as-community arrangement, that is in a circle. In this manner, the facilitator was able to model the dynamics of community through the spatial dimension. It is in a circle that all persons are accorded the privilege of viewing

each other, and where all persons can feel included in the process. The twelve participants and the facilitator were positioned in the circular arrangement of tables and chairs.

A series of educational modules entitled *Lift Every Voice*[4] had been developed by the facilitator as the teaching guide for the six week project. The presentation of each training module consisted of two primary components: 1) a didactic/pedagogical session that was held on Saturday morning in the communally-configured room at the public library between the hours of 9:00 a.m. to 12 noon; and 2) a homiletical endeavor that dealt with issues of accountable leadership and community was presented by the preacher during the Sunday worship service. In this way, the facilitator was taking advantage of every teachable moment and she was attempting to provide reinforcement to the participants.

The training began in earnest with the presentation of Module 1. The participants were invited to share in a devotional time that consisted of the singing of a familiar song, the reading of scripture, a prayer and words of greeting. The group of persons who shared in the devotion was composed of persons from each of the various lay ministries of Antioch. At the completion of the devotional time, the facilitator provided an oral recapitulation of the objectives and purposes for the leadership training project. The categories of lay ministries at Antioch and the proposed slate of lay leaders were discussed.

Subsequent to the opening remarks by the facilitator, the various lay ministries were enjoined to begin solidifying a communal relationship among themselves. This was done through the completion of a worksheet. On this worksheet, the individuals were to

[4] Appendix B.

work as a team and respond to some entertaining questions. For example, the ministry members were asked to select a mascot for their ministry and explain why they chose said mascot. Questions of this nature were included in ways that would begin to promote the ideals of community among the ministry persons.

The teaching portion of Module 1 centered on insuring that each person was familiar with the vision of God for Antioch Baptist Christian Church. The objectives of this component were two-fold: 1) the vision of God for Antioch would come to represent the voice of God that should resonate throughout the ministry's endeavors in planning, developing and implementing project and activities in the church; 2) each lay leader would become acutely aware of and thoroughly familiar with the vision that God had given to Antioch.

It was on the following Sunday that the researcher/Pastor employed the text of the seventh chapter of Deuteronomy, verses seven and eight to proclaim God's vision for the nation of Israel. "*It was not because you were more numerous than any other people that the LORD set his heart on you and chose you-for you were the fewest of all people. It* was *because the LORD loved you and kept the oath that he swore to your ancestors, that the LORD has brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you from the house of slavery, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt."* The topic of, 'The Incredulity of Being Chosen: Do You See What God Sees?' allowed the preacher to emphasize three points in the sermon: 1) God's vision for a community is related to identity – who not what; 2) the source of the vision is God; and 3) the leaders and the people of God are spiritually responsible for knowing and understanding the vision of God

Where the topic for session 1 of the leadership training program centered on an articulation and understanding of the vision of God for Antioch, the second session was formatted in order to highlight and teach the mission of Antioch. The teaching session of Module 2 emphasized the perspective that the mission of the church should properly flow out of the vision for the church. Therefore, the mission of the church can be seen to represent the ecclesial voice that should resonate in every activity and project that is planned by the various lay ministries. The homiletical portion of this session brought clarity to the mission of Antioch through the employment of the percicope of the fourth chapter of Luke, verses sixteen through nineteen. The key points of the sermon included the truth that the Person of Jesus Christ was the bodily (incarnated) vision of God; the mission of Jesus grew out of the vision; and mission is always associated with action for the good of people and interaction with the people.

The facilitator used the next session to engender an understanding on the community of persons who claim Antioch Baptist Christian Church as their church home. The title of Module 3 was 'The Voice of the Community'. The objectives of this session revolved around providing a communal construct that the lay leaders would be able to use in understanding the community. The facilitator taught the lay leaders the principles of 'how to hear people into speech'. The lay leaders participated in an exercise that called for them to formulate the social framework of Antioch through a case study that had been prepared for the session.

The facilitator provided a written and verbal recapitulation of the previous three sessions during the fourth session. At the completion of the summary, the information in

Module 4 centered on the leadership identity of the participants in the training program. The results from the PACE Profile were discussed in detail.

The PACE Profile inventory is designed to help individuals identify how they use their strengths in specific contexts. The inventory is context sensitive. Upon completion and the tabulation of the scores on the inventory, one could grasp the possibility of their style of responsiveness. Three of the participants exhibited tendencies that indicated they possessed the predicting style. A person with the predicting style tends to be a solo worker and moves with deliberation towards a practical outcome. Two persons favored the summary style. These persons see themselves as team players whose purpose is to create harmony by attending to the needs of others. One person demonstrated the conducting personality. A conducting style leads competently and efficiently towards clear goals. The remaining six persons were also team players, albeit team players who work well with others in order to make a more perfect place. These six could be categorized as possessing the excelling style. The final portion of Module 4 consisted of a Leadership Grading exercise.

The final two modules, five and six, dealt with the actual process of how to plan ministry projects that matter. Because the information in these modules would become central to the future work of the lay ministries, this session was expanded to encompass the entire day. During the morning session, the facilitator used the time to present the practicalities that should be involved in planning ministry projects. The facilitator led the participants in a hands-on demonstration of actually planning a ministry project for the community of Antioch in the afternoon session. It was in the orthopraxy that the

participants were called upon to put into practice all that they had learned during the previous sessions.

The Evaluative Phase

The leaders who participated in the six-week long leadership training and development project, *Lift Every Voice,* were also encouraged to engage in two sessions on evaluation. The lay leaders underwent a teaching session on the value and importance of evaluation. Subsequent to the teaching session, the Lay Leadership Post- Test and a Survey were administered to the participants.

The components of the teaching session included the topic of *Evaluation as Collaborative Inquiry.*[5] The facilitator strongly adheres to the philosophy that good evaluation should be built into, not onto, every ministry project. Concurrent with this understanding is the fact that all evaluation should be premised on three important dimensions – learning, leadership and accountability. This succinctly represents the definition of collaborative evaluation.

The lay leaders completed a survey document which related to the recently completed leadership training program. The results from the survey were as follows:

Question: *How many training sessions did you attend?*

The entire group of twelve persons attended all six of the sessions in the performance phase and the two sessions in the evaluation phase.

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[5] Appendix B.

Question: *Did the training sessions provide concrete information about lay leadership which you did not already know?*

An affirmative response was given by all twelve persons.

Question: *If yes, what new information did you gain? If no, what information did you hope would be presented?*

The overwhelming majority of persons indicated that they developed a better understanding of ministry from the lay perspective. They also stated that they now understood the importance of and reason for having formal lay ministry meetings that followed an established protocol (agenda). Their sense of hearing the voices of the community was heightened, because they had learned how to ask open-ended questions and to wait for responses from the respondent.

Question: *Did the training sessions provide information that will be helpful to you in planning ministry projects in Antioch?*

The response was yes.

Question: *Did you have sufficient opportunity to put into practice what you learned?*

Three (3) of the participants indicated a desire for more time during the application portion of the training session.

Question: *Do you think that the training was worthwhile?*

Yes was the response.

Question: *What are some insights you gained about planning ministry projects?*

Ministry projects must be clearly focused and based on the vision, mission and community. It takes critical thinking skills, courage and time to plan

effective projects. Without a doubt, the disciplines of prayer and the study of God's word must be included in any planning process.

Question: *What are some insights you gained about the position and responsibility of lay leadership?*

The insights that were mentioned by several of the participants related to the fact that lay leaders are directly accountable to God and are directly responsible to the community of faith.

Prior to their commencement in the leadership development project, *Lift Every Voice*, each prospective lay person completed the Pre-test on Lay Leadership. At the conclusion of the program, a Post-test on Lay Leadership was administered. Although the questions for both the pre- and post-test were similar, there was one significant variation. Where the questions on the pre-test were posed in the past tense, the questions on the post-test were written using the present tense of verbs.

The results of the portions of the post-test that are meaningful for the researcher's hypothesis and ministry project can be represented as follows:

Question A.4 *What type of polity is practiced in this church?*

Ten of the twelve were able to respond with the answer 'autonomous'.

Question C: *How were you appointed/selected/chosen to serve as a lay leader?*

All twelve respondents provided the answers that they had undergone the administration of a gifts inventory; a personal consultation with the Pastors; after a time of deliberation that was spent in prayer and meditation.

Question D: *Please state the vision of the church in which you serve as a lay leader.*

All were able to state the vision of Antioch Baptist Christian Church as God's vision for the church to become God's church of Jubilee, where freedom in Jesus Christ is proclaimed and practiced.

Question F: *Training.*

All persons underwent the church-sponsored training program. There was a written curriculum.

Summary

It is the opinion of the researcher/pastor that the hypothesis which she had articulated as the formative question for the model of ministry was confirmed to a certain degree. The preliminary findings support the view that lay leaders need to undergo a regimen of training that has been specifically designed for them. If lay ministries are to witness the Good News of Jesus Christ to the congregation, it becomes vitally important for the lay leaders to develop the skill sets that would enable them do pursue this call.

CHAPTER SIX

REFLECTION, SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The author will address three (3) basic questions in Chapter Six. In this way she will capture and bring finality to her project and model of ministry.

What were the author's basic assumptions going into the study? She came to this study with an underlying assumption that lay ministries and lay leaders are vital components in the church's call to be the body of Christ and to witness the Good News. She also had the belief that lay ministries were not being fully utilized in the proclamation of the Good News. She understood that some tension exists between the clergy ranks and the lay ministry in the matter of witnessing the Good News. The Biblical record, history and theology support a model of witnessing that emphasizes the shared-ministry concept. It was her understanding that everyone desires to practice a ministry of excellence. However, in order to do this, lay leaders, as well as others need to be trained.

What were the limitations of the study? One of the limitations of the study might be the fact that the pool of persons who participated in the data collection process might not have been large enough to evince a more definitive picture of the efficaciousness of existing lay leaders and their practice of ministry. The accuracy of the data was dependent upon the honesty and recollection of the participants. There is also the possibility that the Project Participants might not have had enough time to digest and understand all of the information that was presented to them in the implementation phase of the project. The generalizations from the findings of the study should not be limited to

churches in contexts that are similar to the test context. It might prove difficult to implement the findings from this study in an established church setting. It became apparent that in order to implement a model of ministry that has the appearance of a new paradigm, the researcher would need to have the full backing of the Pastor and other decision makers in the church. Barring this type of support, the researcher would need to be empowered through her call and ministry position to set this type of ministry in place in a church. It might prove advisable to the church if the lay leaders were offered training specific to the accomplishment of one particular ministry project, rather than generalized training.

What is the significance of the study? It will add to the body of knowledge in the area of lay leaders and how they can be used to train and equip believers in their pursuit of becoming disciples. It will serve as a resource and guide to Pastors, Christian educators by increasing their awareness of the importance of the laity and lay leaders and their contributions to the spiritual growth and development of the church. It will further emphasize the importance and need for more training of the laity in the church. It will encourage all persons to seek to exercise and practice their call to be the royal priesthood.

From the perspective of the researcher/Pastor, the insight that was gained from this model of ministry lies in the dynamics of affirmation. The twelve lay leaders voluntarily and joyfully attended and participated in the training sessions. Undoubtedly there were other things in which they could have been engaged, yet they chose of their own accord to attend the training. Not only did these persons attend, they brought all their spiritual, mental and physical energies to bear in the completion of the training with character and integrity. As pastors, there is the tendency to *dis-remember* that from time

to time, all persons need some kind of affirmation. The term *dis-remember* is being deliberately used in this document, because it speaks to the reality that although the truth is known to an individual, somewhere and somehow the truth-knower fails to become a truth-teller. With that said, this researcher/pastor recognizes the truth that all persons need to know that their efforts, their work and their sacrifices are appreciated by the community. One key component of all future training will be a time of affirmation for the participants. Although, the researcher/pastor provided a Certificate of Achievement to each of the twelve lay leaders, this was not done in a way that lifted up community. With the advantage of hindsight, the researcher/Pastor will, in all future training endeavors, opt to affirm persons in a way that allows the full community of worshipers to participate in the celebration.

The researcher/activist offers reflections on this matter of leadership. Leadership, leaders and lead are words in which the meanings are contained in the language. The church and the world have chosen to equate these words with the dynamics that exist around power, authority and control. Therefore, when the church allows persons to practice the discipline of leadership, the resulting outcomes often resemble oppression and denial of personhood for those on the receiving end of leadership. The question that rises up in the researcher/activist is how to re-interpret the terms leadership and leaders in ways that lend themselves to *empowerment* and not power that seeks to oppress others.

A chance reading of a newsletter published by the Atlanta Women's Foundation provided the researcher/activist with a possible start on a re-interpretation of leadership. "Leadership is not a title, but a set of behaviors", opined Ms. Lisa Keyes[1]. When

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[1] Lisa Keyes, *No Small Change* (Atlanta: AWF Publishers, 2005), 3.

leadership is viewed as behavior, rather than a title, then those who maintain a presence as leaders might more readily perceive the aspects of responsibility, accountability, character and integrity in performing the requisite behaviors of leadership.

As was duly noted in the earlier chapters of her dissertation, the author is presently serving in the position of Pastor of Antioch Baptist Christian Church. She also indicated that her spouse, Reverend A. D. Waddell, also serves as Pastor of Antioch Baptist Christian Church. The author/Pastor/researcher is presciently aware of the fact that this arrangement of pastoral leadership is a shift in paradigm. There are many pastoral models where the husband is the Pastor and the wife serves in the position of Co-Pastor. This paradigm of husband-Pastor and wife-Co-Pastor is not a new phenomenon, having been in existence for the past several years. However the model of wife-Pastor and husband-Pastor is so new that guidelines for this paradigm are not in existence. Therefore, the author/Pastor/researcher fully appreciates the fact that she is traveling in uncharted territory. Without any reservation, the author/Pastor/researcher asserts that this pastoral paradigm of leadership has been fraught with some unease and tension. However, both the researcher/Pastor and her spouse are committed to doing good ministry as a couple.

The author in her role as pastor has been allowed to glimpse several aspects of human nature. She has observed lay persons demonstrate behavior that is reminiscent of persons in called ministry. She would offer the proposal of the creation of a behavioral/functionality level of leadership in the church that would fit alongside that of the lay leadership level, yet with the added principles of the priestly and prophetic to this newly created behavioral/functionality level of lay leadership.

During her short tenure as Pastor of Antioch, the author has witnessed how several persons seem to demonstrate evidence of a call into the licensed and ordained ministry. Whenever these persons are chosen to participate in worship or in any church related opportunity, they assume the posture and demeanor of clergy. However, these persons adamantly deny being called into the licensed and/or ordained ranks of clergy. Based upon these observations, the author/Pastor would suggest that one possible solution to this issue would be for the autonomous church to look at ways in which to invest the lay leadership tier with more sacred and sacerdotal accountability.

There is a latent, but very real, concern that resonates with this author. Due to the fact that most autonomous churches are led by Pastors who operate as the decision-maker for all aspects of the church, a paradigm that encourages empowerment of lay leaders might not be acceptable in these contexts. However, if the empowerment model of lay leadership is infused with the understanding that the Pastor will continue the accountability of exercising the responsibility for making decisions that affect the liturgical life of the church, this model might be of benefit to such churches.

The urban church in the twenty-first century is facing a myriad of issues, challenges and concerns that were not in evidence in other periods of history. Rampant and unchecked social ills, issues of poverty and the depletions of life that accompany poverty, entrenched traditionalism, encroachment of the state into church matters, inclusion or exclusion of persons who adhere to a lifestyle that differs from the conventional, broken families – all of these challenges, and more, have arrived at the door of the church. They are not only at the door of the church, they can most assuredly be found resident in the church.

Throughout the annals of human history, life has been fraught with challenges that appear to be insurmountable. This is no less the situation in this twenty-first millennium. Yet God in the omniscience of God has empowered the church to become a vessel that can be used in seeking remedies and redress for the challenges that come with living on this orb that God denominated as earth. This is truly a wonderful bestowal of empowerment upon the church and all who associate themselves with the church.

If God has endowed the whole church with the moral mandate to tend to the people of God and to the world, it would only seem reasonable that those who occupy the pews, the laity, would be involved in authentic ministry. It is sad to see many urban churches who continue to fail to appreciate the rich vein of resources they have in their midst – lay persons. This failure has resulted in a spirit of underestimating the people who occupy the pews and the gifts, skills and talents they bring. In doing so the urban church has done a disservice to many persons and is poised to fail in spreading the Good News to the uttermost parts of the world.

The Good News of the church exists in and should be proclaimed in a construct of similitude – salvific/soteriological and ontological. The Good News is salvific and soteriological when the message from the church encompasses the kergymatic disciplines and the lived-out experiences. The message of the church becomes ontological when the believers in the community embrace the Good News in their authentic humanity. Any failure on the part of the church to fully engage in both of these dimensions of the Good News is a failure to be about the business of God.

Because of this awesome task of the church to mediate God to a people whose lives are fraught with humanity, it becomes incumbent upon the church to engage all of

the ecclesial entities in its domain in order to accomplish this task. Yet, there is a tendency in the church to charge the clergy with this task and to overlook one of the most precious resources available to the church, the laity.

The wisdom of God is far above that of any persons. This author has come to truly exult in God's providential concern in all matters of life. It was in the providence of God that the author's context for the implementation of this ministry project was changed well before the project was under way. After careful consideration, the author now realizes that her former context of ministry would not have been an appropriate place in which to demonstrate her proposed model. Although the Pastor at her former context had a willingness to introduce a different mode of lay ministry at the church, he did not have the inclination to pursue a model that would prove to be an expansive as the model that this author proposed. Thus, the author can only offer word of profound gratitude for God's omniscience and providence.

The author began with the premise that there is great value in lay ministries. Her observation of the several lay ministries in her previous church association awakened her to the fact that the church might possibly be under-utilizing one of its best assets. With a church population in excess of two thousand persons who are inundated with egregious life situations and a clergy staff of three persons, the prospect of each of these two thousand persons engaging in a liberative, empowering and transformative experience becomes slim when the church fails to enlist the assistance of its lay ministries.

However, it would be senseless for the church to unleash a cadre of lay persons who have not been sufficiently trained in the dispensation of transformative ministry. Yet, this has occurred all too often in many autonomous faith traditions.

While the work in the doctoral program has been demanding and rigorous, it has been one that has proved to be well worth the investment of time, energy and resources. Throughout the doctoral journey the researcher has taken the opportunity to engage in critical reflection. If anything, she would opine that the model of ministry which she proposed has only skimmed the surface. It has not reached a point of finality, nor does it offer an answer to the totality of the situation. It does, however, dare to raise the question on effective lay ministries and their operation in the church setting.

The recommendation that she would make is that churches must begin a deliberate and intentional system of accounting that seeks to recognize and embrace all of its human capital who are in their very midst. Whatever else the church is, it is absolutely a gathering of persons whom God has called to enter into covenant relationship with God and into koinonia with each other. If the church is to truly witness to the world, it must be willing to allow the people of God from the pews to become empowered to join in the spread of the Gospel.

In his book, *A Relevant Word,* Dr. Robert Duffett postulates that there is a seeker church movement on the ecclesial horizon. Contrary to the opinions that have been offered by many of its detractors, the seeker church movement is not about the church becoming contemporary. Rather, it is about the church *becoming community.*[2] This is a powerful statement, yet all too often present-day churches are seemingly unconcerned about this matter of community. This researcher would like to encourage all churches to exercise their collective memories and recall that God's purpose in establishing the church was to institute a new family, a new community whose head is Jesus Christ!

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[2] Robert Duffett, *The Relevant Word* (Valley Forge: Judson Press, 1995), ix.

Finally, the church has been entrusted with the mission of witnessing the Gospel to the world. "But the Holy Spirit will come upon you and give you power. Then you will tell everyone about me in Jerusalem, in all Judea, in Samaria and everywhere in the world." The probability of the church voicing about Jesus everywhere in the world becomes slim, if the church is unable to allow the full gathering of persons to engage in the act of voicing about Jesus at home in Jerusalem. This is what a trained group of lay leaders can do when they have been empowered through a regimen of training that seeks to edify the full body of believers in the church.

GLOSSARY

1. Autonomy – a state of independence; a way of governance within an organization that relies upon the structure of the organization;
2. Boundary leader – a leader who chooses to operate outside the prescribed limits of organizations and networks; one who never allows the status quo to control; one who thinks and acts locally and globally.
3. Collaborative evaluation – a communal or group process of measuring the results of a project according to a set of pre-determined standards; the key component in collaborative evaluation is group interaction in the process.
4. Community – a gathering or grouping of persons who are bound together through that which they hold in similitude; an organic convocation of individuals who voluntarily unite for common purposes; persons whose diversities come together in ways that result in unity.
5. Ecclesia – the community of believers whom Jesus Christ has called together because of their belief in Jesus Christ as the Son of God.
6. Empowerment – as opposed to power, this is a dynamic series of occasions that recognizes power as coming from an outside source; a bestowal of positive and affirming energy that will lead to health, wholeness and personhood.
7. Engaged pedagogy – a discipline of education that focuses on a dialogical process that allows for communal interaction between the teacher and the

students; education that uplifts and empowers all persons through the constructive employment of criticism and evaluation.

8. Hearing-into-speech – an expression that is detailed in the book *Teologia en Conjunto: A Collaborative Hispanic Protestant Theology* edited by Jose David Rodriguez and Loida I. Martell-Otero; an organic process that is used to assist persons who have lost their ability and will to verbalize to return to full voice in the community; a way of allowing persons to realize that their thoughts and ideas count.

9. Koinonia - a Greek term taken from the New Testament that represents the understanding that the believers are in common union with God in and through the Person of Jesus Christ; and that the believers are in common union with other believers in the household of faith (the church).

10. Liberation – freedom that affirms the individual as well as the collective body of persons; spiritual openness that is demonstrated attitudinally and behaviorally.

11. Metanoia – a Greek term that refers to the changes (spiritually, behaviorally, mentally and conceptually) that occur when an individual has accepted Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior; a changed lifestyle as a result of being born again.

12. Transformation – another word that is used to define change; the process that flows from being born again; changes in attitude and critical thinking that results in wholeness, well-being and peace which affirms the personhood of an individual.

APPENDIX A

SURVEYS, PRE-TEST, POST-TEST

Congregational Involvement Survey

1. Age:
   { } under 21 { } 21-34 { } 35-45
   { } 46- 55 { } 56-64 { } over 65

2. What is your gender?
   { } male { } female

3. Marital status:
   { } single, never married
   { } separated or divorced
   { } widowed
   { } married

4. Number and ages of children:
   Birth – 4 years old { } Number
   5-12 years old { } Number
   13 – 17 years { } Number

5. Length of membership in the congregation:
   { } not a member { } one year or less { } 2-5 years
   { } 6-10 years { } 11- 19 years { } 20+ years

6. On average, how many times have you attended worship services within the past year?
   { } none
   { } about once a month
   { } about once or twice a year
   { } about two or three times a month
   { } once or twice every three months
   { } four or more times a month

7. In how many church ministries do you hold membership (not counting church membership itself)?
   { } none { } one { } two { } three { } four or more

8. Has your involvement (attendance and participation) in church lay ministries' activities and projects increased, decreased or remained the same in the last year?

{ } increased { } decreased { } remained the same

9. If your involvement (attendance and participation) in church lay ministries' activities and projects decreased, please check all reasons that apply.

{ } less time available
{ } because of children
{ } lost interest in ministry
{ } activities not relevant to my life
{ } more negative attitude towards the ministries
{ } other _____
{ } health problems
{ } decreased faith

10. If your involvement in the church lay ministries increased, please check all reasons that apply.

{ } more time available
{ } because of children
{ } accepted responsibility in lay ministry
{ } more positive attitude towards the ministries
{ } increased faith
{ } other: _____

After you have completed this survey, please reserve ten to fifteen minutes for a personal interview with Rev. Maxine Waddell.

THE RESULTS OF THIS CONGREGATIONAL INVOLVEMENT SURVEY WILL BE USED BY REVEREND MAXINE WADDELL IN THE COMPLETION OF THE DOCTORAL PROGRAM AT UNITED THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY.

Thanks!

PRE –TEST: LAY LEADERSHIP

A. Demographics

1. _____
First Name Last Name

2. _____
Name of Church Where You Served as a Lay Leader

3. _____
Name of Pastor

4. What type of polity was practiced at this church? Autonomous_____

Hierarchical_____ Espiscopal_____ Other _____

Don't know_____

B. Experiential Aspects of Lay Leadership

1. How long did you serve as a lay leader in your previous church association?_____

2. What position or office did you hold as a lay leader?_____

C. Appointment/Selection to Lay Leadership

*Please check all that apply to the manner in which you were appointed/selected/chosen to serve as a lay leader:

_____ through the administration of a gifts inventory

_____through pastoral appointment/selection

_____ through legacy, that is, inheritance of a leadership position from a family member

_____through the recommendations of someone else

_____other (please explain):_____

D. Church

1. Please state the vision of the church in which you served as a lay leader.

2. What was the mission statement?

E. Community

a. Did you participate in planning activities for the ministry in which you served as lay leader?_____

b. If yes, did you or your ministry plan activities that were of significance to the members? (activities that related to the lives and issues of the members) _____

F. Training

a. Did the church provide you with training on how to serve as a lay leader?_____

b. If yes, was there a written curriculum that accompanied the training? _____

c. Did the church provide you with training on how to plan, develop and implement ministry activities?_____

d. If yes, was there a written curriculum that accompanied the training?____

POST –TEST: LAY LEADERSHIP

A. Demographics

1. _____
First Name Last Name

2. _____
Name of Church Where You Presently Serve as a Lay Leader

3. _____
Name of Pastor

4. What type of polity is practiced at this church? Autonomous_____

Hierarchical_____ Espiscopal_____ Other _____

Don't know_____

B. Experiential Aspects of Lay Leadership

1. How long have you been serving as a lay leader in your present church association?_____

2. What position or office do you hold as a lay leader?_____

C. Appointment/Selection to Lay Leadership

*Please check all that apply to the manner in which you were appointed/selected/chosen to serve as a lay leader:

_____ through the administration of a gifts inventory

_____through pastoral appointment/selection

_____ through legacy, that is, inheritance of a leadership position from a family member

_____through the recommendations of someone else

_____other (please explain):_____

D. Church

1. Please state the vision of the church in which you serve as a lay leader.

2. What is the mission statement?

E. Community

1. Do you participate in planning activities for the ministry in which you serve as lay leader?_____

2. If yes, do you or your ministry plan activities that are of significance to the members? (activities that related to the lives and issues of the members) _____

F. Training

1. Did the church provide you with training on how to serve as a lay leader?_____

2. If yes, was there a written curriculum that accompanied the training? _____

3. Did the church provide you with training on how to plan, develop and implement ministry activities?_____

4. If yes, was there a written curriculum that accompanied the training?____

APPENDIX B

TEACHING OUTLINES

Lift Every Voice and Sing
A Developmental Lay Leadership Training Program
Antioch Baptist Christian Church
Rev. Dr. Maxine Waddell, Convener & Facilitator

SESSION 1

Devotion – Welcome- Greetings

Into Community: Ice Breaker Exercises & Worksheet for Lay Leaders

Training Overview: What is meant by 'lift every voice'?

Introduction of the Slate of Lay Ministries & Prospective Lay Leaders

DIDACTIC SESSION (Plenary)
Module 1: The Vision of God for Antioch
What is meant by the word 'vision'?
What are visions?
Who gives the vision?
Whose voice should resonate in the vision?

B-R-E-A-K

Reaching Community Consensus
Small Group discussions: An articulation of the vision of God for Antioch

PLENARY
Review & Recapitulation

CLOSING & BENEDICTION

Lift Every Voice and Sing
A Developmental Lay Leadership Training Program
Antioch Baptist Christian Church
Rev. Dr. Maxine Waddell, Convener & Facilitator

SESSION 2

Devotion – Welcome- Greetings

Into Community: Ice Breaker Exercises & Worksheet for Lay Leaders

Training Overview: What is the vision of God for Antioch?

DIDACTIC SESSION (Plenary)
Module 2: The Mission of Antioch
The mission flows out of the vision.
Mission is 'action'.
What is the mission of Antioch?
Whose voice should resonate in the mission?

B-R-E-A-K

Reaching Community Consensus
Small Group discussions: An articulation of the mission of Antioch

PLENARY
Review & Recapitulation

CLOSING & BENEDICTION

Lift Every Voice and Sing
A Developmental Lay Leadership Training Program
Antioch Baptist Christian Church
Rev. Dr. Maxine Waddell, Convener & Facilitator

SESSION 3

Devotion – Welcome- Greetings

Into Community: Ice Breaker Exercises & Worksheet for Lay Leaders

Training Overview: What is the vision and mission of Antioch?

DIDACTIC SESSION (Plenary)
Module 3: The Voice of the Community
Review of study guide: Hearing the voice of the community
Silence in the community
The discipline of 'hearing people into speech'
Determining the voice of Antioch

B-R-E-A-K

Reaching Community Consensus
Small Group discussions: Write a case study on the identity of the community of Antioch

PLENARY
Compiling the findings from the small group discussions

CLOSING & BENEDICTION

Lift Every Voice and Sing
A Developmental Lay Leadership Training Program
Antioch Baptist Christian Church
Rev. Dr. Maxine Waddell, Convener & Facilitator

SESSION 4

Devotion – Welcome- Greetings

Into Community: Ice Breaker Exercises & Worksheet for Lay Leaders

Training Overview: What is the vision and mission of Antioch?
Who is Antioch Baptist Christian Church?

DIDACTIC SESSION (Plenary)
Module 4: Calling all Lay Leaders!
Review of study guide
Who are lay leaders?
The volunteer plan of lay leadership
Determining the voice of the lay leaders
KNOW THYSELF: PACE Profile

B-R-E-A-K

Reaching Community Consensus
Small Group discussions: Leadership Quiz

PLENARY
Discuss the findings from the Leadership Quiz

CLOSING & BENEDICTION

Lift Every Voice and Sing
A Developmental Lay Leadership Training Program
Antioch Baptist Christian Church
Rev. Dr. Maxine Waddell, Convener & Facilitator

SESSIONS 5

Devotion – Welcome- Greetings

Into Community: Continental breakfast

Training Overview: Putting it all together!

DIDACTIC SESSION (Plenary)
Module 5: How to plan ministry projects that matter
The vision
The mission
The community
The lay leaders
Formulating ministry projects

B-R-E-A-K

ORTHOPRAXY (Plenary)
The lay leaders plan a project: A Celebration of Grace, Love & History

CLOSING & BENEDICTION

Lift Every Voice and Sing
A Developmental Lay Leadership Training Program
Antioch Baptist Christian Church
Rev. Dr. Maxine Waddell, Convener & Facilitator

SESSIONS 6

Devotion – Welcome- Greetings

Into Community: Continental breakfast

Training Overview: Evaluation

DIDACTIC SESSION (Plenary)
Module 6: How to evaluate
Evaluation is . . .
Who or what is evaluated?
Collaborative inquiry

B-R-E-A-K

ORTHOPRAXY (Plenary)
The lay leaders will evaluate the project they planned: A Celebration of Grace, Love & History

SURVEY QUESTIONS

CLOSING & BENEDICTION

APPENDIX C

DATA TABLES

Data Table 1: Congregational Involvement Survey

Question 9: The reasons for decreased involvement in lay ministry projects and activities in the last year.

Reasons	**Number of persons**
Less available time	3
Need to care for children	3
Lost interest in lay ministry	12
Activities were not relevant	7

Data Table 2: Comparison of Pre-Test and Post-Test for Lay Leadership

Question C: How were you chosen to become a lay leader?

Question D.1: How many know the vision of the church?

Question D.2: How many know the mission of the church?

	Pre-Test Responses	**Post-Test Responses**	**Differentials: Pre-Test Results vs. Post-Test Results**
Total Responses	12	12	0
Chosen for lay leadership by appointment: pastoral or otherwise	5	0	-5
Knew the vision of the church	0	12	+12
Knew the mission of the church	0	0	+12

Data Table 3: Comparison of Results: Pre-Test and Post-Test for Leaders

Question F: The church provided training on how to serve as a lay leader

Question F.3: The church provided training on how to plan, develop and implement ministry programs

	Pre-Test Responses	**Post-Test Responses**	**Differentials: Pre-Test Results vs. Post-Test Results**
Church leadership provided lay leadership training	0	12	+12
Church provided training on how to plan, develop and implement ministry programs	0	12	+12

Data Table 4: Results from the Wagner-Modified Houts Questionnaire (Gifts Inventory)

Questions:

15 When I speak, people seem to listen and agree.

40 Other Christians have followed my leadership because they believed in me.

65 When I set goals, others seem to accept them readily.

90 When I join a group, others seem to see me as the leader.

115 When I am in leadership, things seem to run smoothly.

Forty respondents participated in the questionnaire and the results were as follows:

	(3) Much	**(2) Some**	**(1) Little**	**(0) Not at all**
Question 15	7	5	12	16
Question 40	8	4	14	14
Question 65	10	2	14	14
Question 90	11	1	16	12

The leadership assets that were exemplified in these responses were:

- the ability to clearly articulate information to others (question 15)
- credibility (question 40)
- goal-setting skills (question 65)
- leadership characteristics (question 90)
- the ability to work through conflicts (question 115)

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